This Book

MY EXPERIENCES IN THE MISSION FIELD OF SOUTH DAKOTA

During the Years 1892 -1897

IS DEDICATED TO MY CHILDREN:

MRS. E. F. FREY
DR. T. C. KIESS
MRS. ENO BAUMAN
MRS. HAROLD G. LANKENAU

The Author,
F. A. KIESS, Logansport, Indiana
In the Year of Our Lord, 1932

The Lord Jesus Christ be with you, my children,
as he was with your Mother and Father.

Matt. 28, 19: "Go, Teach, Baptize."
Mark 16, 15-16: "Preach."

PREFACE

The Territory of the Missionfield, in South Dakota.

The territory was in the counties—

Spink.
Brown.
Edmunds.
Potter.
Faulk.

Look at the map!

Mission Trips Made.

By request of Dr. Pfotenhauer, to explore the Black Hills in South Dakota, made a trip there by ponies, no railroad then, with my faithful partner, the sainted Rev. Julius Naumann.

By request of the missionboard, made a trip, with friend Naumann, through the Indian Reservation, Sisseton, South Dakota.

By request of that same mission board, made several trips in North Dakota, over Oaks from Aberdeen, and over Jamestown, to Mandan, Bismarck, and Hanover, to explore this territory.

Congregations and Preaching Places.

Mansfield, the home congregation, where I lived.
Rudolph, the largest congregation there at that time.
Aberdeen, the smallest congregation then.
Mellett, the west at that time, a thrifty congregation.
Ashton, a preaching place, organized a congregation in 1893.
Lebanon, only explored, found a few Lutherans.
Spink, by chance found these people in 1893.
Ipswich, a small preaching place, then in 1892.
Roscoe, organized, small congregation, faithful people.
Eureka, a preaching place, the people not so good then, 1894.
Faulkton, two families only, an egg at least.
Look at the number of ministers serving in that missionfield now!

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CHAPTER I

Childhood Days, College and Seminary.

I was born on November 19, 1867 in Medina County, Ohio. There were four sisters and four brothers in the family. My father's name was John Frederick Kiess, and my mother's name was Louise Betz Kiess. I was the second youngest in the family and when I was a year old my parents moved to Adams County, Indiana. There in Friedheim, my good and pious parents died and are buried. I spent my childhood days on the farm of my parents near Decatur, Indiana. My Christian parents attended divine services regularly every Sunday, at a church three (3) miles from our home and we children were taken along to church from our earliest days. I can well remember my dear mother holding me on her lap during the entire service.

CHURCH OF REV. F. A. KIESS AT LOGANSPORT, INDIANA

We were all sent to the Christian day-school to receive a Christian education and training. I thank my dear parents in their graves for what they did for me.

The services in church, particularly the singing accompanied by a huge pipe-organ made such an impression on me, that whenever the children of the neighborhood would come to our house we would conduct church services in a childlike manner and I was the preacher of course. One of my mother's old black dresses would serve as a gown. We sang without words. our songs were minus notes and melody. I cannot remember a single word of my sermons but playing of church pleased my parents immensely. There and then, before I was old enough to go to school, it was decided by my parents to make a preacher of me. I attended public school during summer terms, and in winter the parochial school. After my confirmation in the year 1882, I was sent to Concordia College at Fort Wayne, Indiana, only fifteen (15) miles from our home.

The first year in college, I boarded and lived with the rest of the students but thereafter I boarded with my sister Mary. I shall never forget the good she did for me. Mary was the first of the children to pass away after father and mother were gone. I graduated with the largest class up until

that time, in the year 1889. In the fall of that year, I entered Concordia Seminary in St. Louis, Missouri and graduated from there in June, 1892.

CHAPTER II

My First Call and Congregation.

I received my first call into the largest mission field of the Northwest, in the State of South Dakota, far away from good old home. In September, 1892, I left home for my long journey. My good mother and a brother-in-law, Joseph Koby accompanied me as far as Chicago, where I kissed mother good-bye, but my brother-in-law went with me as far as Milwaukee. There we stayed one week, he returned and I went on to the icy North. When we had entered South Dakota over one hundred miles, the minister who had charge of ordaining and installing me, boarded the train. We had known each other during college days, he was several years ahead of me and served a congregation in Sioux Falls, South Dakota, and formerly had charge of my mission field. Late in the evening of that same day we arrived at Northville, South Dakota, and were met by a member of the congregation at Mansfield, South Dakota, which was to be my post office. The two ponies, bronchos, which were hitched to a lumber wagon, skipped like race horses over the rough prairie.

In a short time we reached our destination, fourteen miles from the station. What an impression the prairie had made upon me! I had never before seen a prairie — no trees, no buildings, no homes, barns or huts, no fences, nothing but heaven above and land below.

Our destination was a member's home. After the greetings a substantial supper was served — good and clean but no variety. I was dead tired so retired to pass my first night in South Dakota and what a sleep!

Ordination and Installation.

On the Sunday following my arrival at my future, large missionfield, I was ordained and installed in the little frame church standing alone in the open prairie on a claim owned by the congregation for the price of only erecting a structure. The church was located five (5) miles from Mansfield.

Long before time for services the members with their entire families began to assemble, arriving in vehicles of every description—lumber wagons, three seated spring wagons, top buggies with and without the top, the latter a luxury in that country. The day was stormy; the wind blew so fiercely it seemed like a hurricane to me. I expected the little church to be blown over every minute.

At last 10 o'clock, the hour for the services, arrived The little church with a tower, similar to La Barita was packed to the doors and some spring seats were brought in from their lumber or farm wagons. This building was built entirely by members, nine bachelors and one married couple. They did all the work themselves, the material was bought and paid for when they could manage to do so. The altar, the pulpit, baptismal font everything made by hand. They looked it, too! There was no organ or melodeon, much less a piano in the church; the pastor started the singing. Sometimes he struck the right pitch but more often the wrong, nevertheless, those German people just over from the Fatherland could sing and did sing, so loud that it drowned the howling wind outside. My dear friend Rev. George Fisher, now deceased, preached a splendid sermon. This was followed by a song and then the grand moment of my ordination came. After the service when general introductions had taken place, I stepped outside where the

people had gathered to greet friends and relatives, and overheard a conversation in Low German in which I was the topic, thus:—"Die neue Pastor blieft nicht be us" meaning " The new minister will not remain with us." I answered in their dialect, "You will see that you are wrong." How surprised they were that I could speak their "Plattdeutsch" (Low German).

After a bountiful dinner prepared by the wife of one of the leading members, Rev. Fisher and I left for the next congregation, at Rudolf, South Dakota, about eighteen (18) miles from the Mansfield congregation, north. This congregation was the largest in the entire mission field. They were not in possession of a church building so the services were held in a small country public school. The members were so crowded together they could not rise for prayers or the Scripture lesson. Even standing room was not available. This service started at two o'clock and I was installed as pastor of this congregation.

Then we headed for the county seat of Brown County, the city of Aberdeen, a beautiful city, modern and up-to-date. It is a railroad and business center, a thriving city. Four families constituted the congregation here and some girls who were employed in the city. Services were conducted in the little three room private home of a member by the name of Jaenecke. I shall never forget the goodness of Mr. Jaenecke and his good wife, Mrs. Jaenecke. We had supper with these people, (I always received my supper from them thereafter) and soon after that my installation took place. These people in Aberdeen proved to be my best Christian friends in South Dakota.

After services we had a social gathering until bedtime. I certainly was tired that evening in spite of not really having done anything. My friend had done the work and showed no signs of fatigue. He was accustomed to the climate and especially the terrible wind.

Aberdeen is about 25 miles from the Mansfield church. I made this trip every other Sunday preaching at Mansfield in the forenoon, at Rudolf in the afternoon and in Aberdeen in the evening, returning the 25 miles to Mansfield where my home was situated because of its central position, the next day. This is a 50 mile round trip and it was made rain or shine. Fortunately, it was mostly shine, we had little rain, but the heat in the few summer months and the cold in winter, sometimes 40 to 50 below zero together with snow drifts, did not make it very pleasant for missionaries. My life was endangered many times and on several occasions I came very near losing it.

Instead of returning to my home the following day, we drove about 20 miles to the town of Groton to get the ponies and buggy which are furnished the missionary in this field. The pastor in Groton cared for them during the vacancy in this field. The top buggy proved to be a very dilapidated affair. The two bronchos were named Minnie and Kate. Minnie was gentle, but Kate could not stand to have her legs touched. These ponies carried me thousands of miles over the prairies and I often thought that if the Good Lord had a better place than earth for animals, these ponies certainly deserved it.

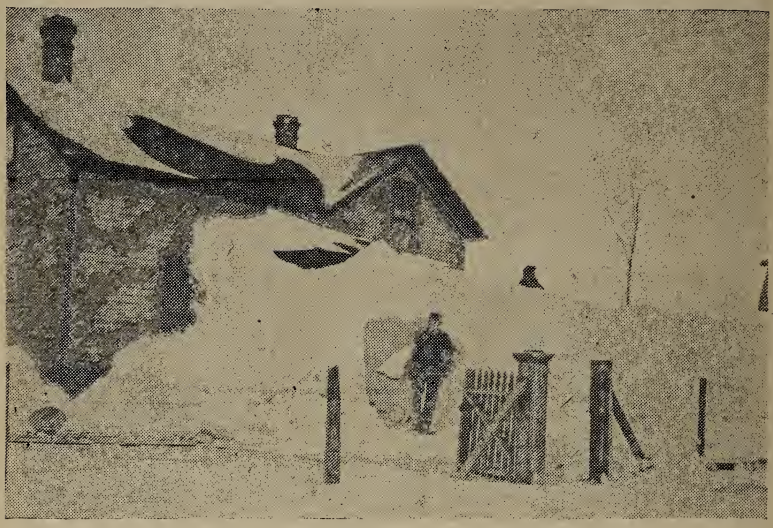
On Tuesday we covered the return 45 miles with the ponies in less than six hours.

THE WESTERN TRIP

During the first week in my mission field, we visited the members of the Mansfield congregation. These people were mostly from Germany, but

one family was from Wisconsin and another family from Ohio. A few had brought some means from the old country, but the majority were very poor. Just think, no family was able to make a living on a farm of 160 acres, they had to farm a larger acreage.

In the year 1892 the farmers in this section of South Dakota had harvested a fairly good crop, the threshing season was in full swing at the time of my arrival, but during my six years of mission work there I saw but one good crop and that only in its growth, it was never harvested. A hailstorm the like of which I have never witnessed destroyed everything. The hailstones were so large they killed the stock in the prairie, broke the



SNOW IN SOUTH DAKOTA — 1896 TO 1897

shingles from the roofs. Nothing was left after the storm, not even the hay or straw outside—the bare ground was all that was left. The farmers immediately left for other parts of the state and other states to earn a little money to carry them through the winter. I saw many a strong man in tears after that storm, and, was it a wonder?

The Dakota soil is very fertile, but lack of rain, early and late frosts, the Russian thistle, the hot winds are the chief enemies of the crops.

Assistance and relief for the hailstricken areas came from other states. Carloads of all kinds of grain, food and clothing were shipped in. I was made distributor of all the goods. This was an enormous task. No distinction was made in the distribution—whether the sufferer was a member of the congregation or not every needy person received his or her portion. Every bushel of grain had to be recorded, for at the next crop, they had to return to the elevator whatever had been received bushel for bushel.

On Saturday before my second Sunday in South Dakota we drove to the western congregations and mission places. Mansfield, my home place, is in Spink County, Rudolf and Aberdeen in Brown County. The western counties are Faulk, Edmunds and Potter. These counties have an area equal to that of Rhode Island. Here in Faulk County was located the fourth organized congregation, about 25 miles from Mansfield. This congregation was in a section of South Dakota where wells were at a

premium. One well served the entire congregation and some had as far as 11 to 13 miles to go. The driven wells were only for cattle, the water being saltwater and for this reason the farmers needed no extra salt for their cattle or their horses. I had a preaching place in Edmonds County, near Ipswich. I made this trip every two weeks—to the congregation on Saturdays a distance of 25 miles, preached there in the forenoon and drove about 20 miles into Edmonds County, preached at the mission place in the afternoon, then returned to the home place, covering 65 miles on that trip.

At Wesley, Spink County, 20 miles southwest of Mansfield, there was another mission place—these people were served partly on week

SNOWDRIFT IN SOUTH DAKOTA — 1896 TO 1897

days and partly on Sundays. After two years of hard labor the number of congregations and preaching places were increased to twelve from the original six. In order to reach these places regularly which were from 75 miles to 90 miles apart, it was necessary to travel with horses and buggy and sled from 4000 to 5000 miles annually.

I added three more ponies to my orginal two—Han was a German, a big long legged, lazy fellow; Dick a chunky, tricky fellow; the name of the fifth has slipped my memory. Besides my five ponies, I had two buggies and one cutter. In some sections the prairie was literally covered with stones, so the ponies had to be shod every four or six weeks and the tires of my buggies renewed every year.

MY FIRST YEAR OF MISSION SERVICE.

Wherever I conducted services, I started a school and instructed the children of the congregations and misssion places. The first year I instructed a class of 44 children for confirmation, they were located at four different congregations and one preaching place. When they were confirmed the parents appreciated my work so much that this first confirmation yielded an increase to my purse of $180.00. Never thereafter did I receive such an amount for confirmation.

Although I was a missionary doing work for the Synod, I never received a dollar from the Synod as salary. During my first year I baptized 80

children, and for every child I received from $1 to $5. The congregations paid me a salary of $400 per year—this was not paid monthly or semi-annually but mark it, every 12 months.

To my care was intrusted the entire mission field of 1000 souls. To visit every family once a year, since they lived so far apart, was the greatest task of my work. Between the congregations which were 25, 50 and 90 miles apart there was scarcely a house nor a living thing to be seen outside of gophers, coyotes, and prairie dogs and the big jack rabbits.

Concerning the climate in the northern part of South Dakota, there are not four seasons, namely: Spring, Summer, Fall and Winter, only two,

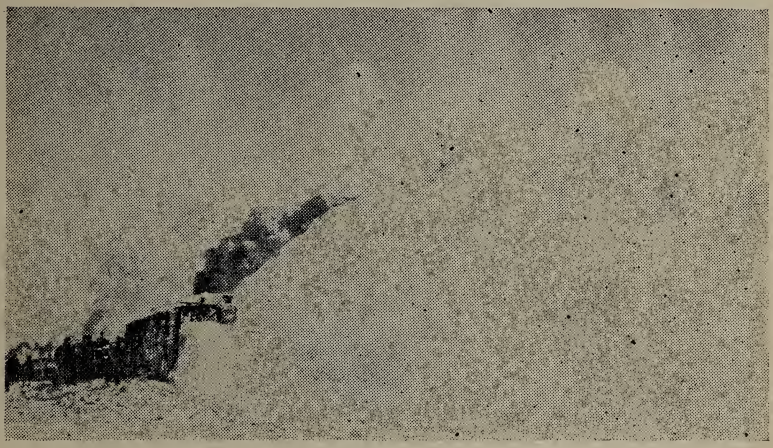
SNOWDRIFT IN SOUTH DAKOTA — 1896 TO 1897

Summer and Winter. Winter very frequently begins in September and lasts until June and from June to September it is Summer. The Summers are as exceedingly hot as the Winters are cold. When no rain falls during May, June and July, everything is dried up and when the hot winds are driven from the southwest over the prairie, the heat becomes unbearable at times, man and beast search for a cool place in the shade or in the cellar. I had my eyelids burnt driving against the hot wind—it is as hot as coming out of an over heated furnace. The heat became so intense the thermometer stood at 115 to 120 in the shade. Perspiration was dried up by the heat before it could be wiped off. The air would be filled by dust and fine sand, almost hiding the sun in a cloudless sky. The crops were burnt and the wind thrashed the few ears of grain left. This is the time when one must look out for prairie fires. On one of my trips after I lit my pipe, I cast away the match. Looking back I noticed the prairie was on fire. I turned the ponies around and drove them into the fire thereby tramping out the blaze and preventing an enormous damage. The hair on the ponies' legs was singed.

On another occasion a prairie fire was following me driven by a swift wind. To save myself and the ponies I started the prairie ahead of me burning and when the fire that followed came to the brunt space, it had no nourishment and I was saved. There is no way of extinguishing a prairie fire, it burns until the entire prairie is black for hunderds of miles.

In order to keep the fire from a town or city or churches, schools and homes outside of the village a firebreak was made. From 10 to 12 furrows were plowed around the entire city or buildings, then a space of several roads was left and another ring of furrows was plowed. This done the prairie grass between the two rings of furrows was set on fire and if a prairie fire approached it, it was halted. In this way entire villages and buildings were saved.

Another plague during the summer months are the mosquitoes. Dakota is filled with slews, that is large and small ponds. Some would dry out in the summer, the deeper ones held water all during the summer.



SNOWPLOW CLEARING THE TRACKS — 1896 TO 1897

These slews were filled with stagnant water and offensive odors came from them. The water was not fit to drink and my ponies would not touch it. The slews were the breeding places for the Dakota mosquitoes which are larger than ordinary mosquitoes. If a person traveled against the wind, he would not be bothered so much, but to travel with the wind—what a torture!

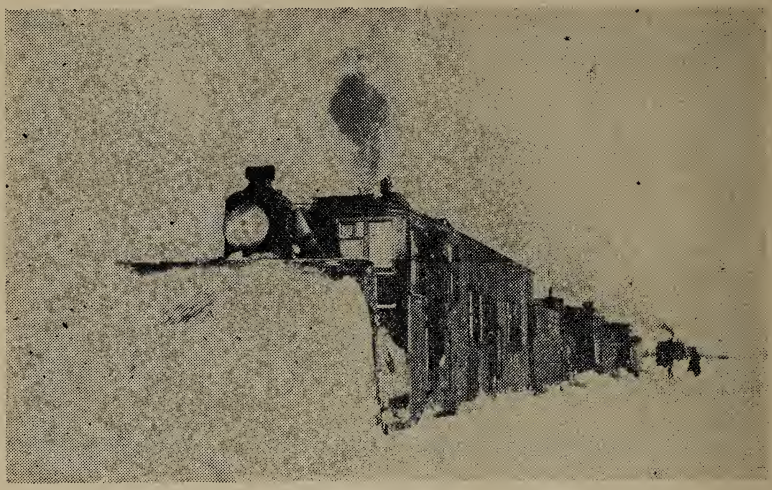
Puffing tobacco smoke at them did a little good. My ponies were actually gray instead of chestnut color from the myriads of insects settled on them.

The thunder in Dakota sounds as though the end of the world was announced. You can hear it and not see a cloud—a thunderstorm may come and pass by and not a drop of rain fall.

Cyclones are very common in Dakota. I witnessed a cyclone when I was about 15 miles from shelter of any kind—out in the open prairie. When the first hail began to come down I hurriedly unhitched the ponies and let them go wherever their instinct directed them. I took down the top of the buggy and piled stones in the buggy to weight it down, then I wrapped myself from head to foot in a blanket. When the hail struck me it felt as though someone were throwing stones at me. I dared not uncover. Soon a soaking rain drenched me and the buggy under which I crawled was lifted up and taken from my sight. I finally found it with all the stones in it over a mile from where it had been. The top was gone, the axles bent almost beyond repair. While I was trying to repair the buggy another hailstorm came up but no cyclone accompanied it, but the

stones were large enough to kill a man. I saved myself by running to a nearby strawstack and crawling into it. After that storm had passed and a little rain, all was over. But where were my ponies? Were they dead or alive; did they make for home or dig themselves into a strawstack? The only thing for me to do was to walk in the direction the cyclone had gone, so walked miles—how many I never knew—but no trace of the ponies and no one of whom I could inquire. By this time it began to get dark.

In the summer the day begins at 2 o'clock in the morning and ends at 10 at night; in winter it is just the reverse—the day begins at 9 in the morning and ends at 3 in the afternoon. In the distance I saw something



A SNOWPLOW PLOWING THROUGH A DRIFT — 1896 TO 1897

dark, was it a strawstack or shack? Upon approaching it, to my joy I found it to be a shack. A man stood in the doorway, he was a bachelor. I told him of my plight and experience. By this time it was dark. He invited me in, told me to take off my wet clothes and dry them. He surely was kind to me. Incidentally, the sociability of Dakota by these first settlers is unsurpassed. I have never found such ready and helping hands. This man and I were soon good friends. He gave me a pair of trousers and a shirt to put on. While I was hanging my wet clothes up to dry, he made some good coffee and fried bacon, eggs and potatoes, he had no bread and butter. I remained with him all night.

When dawn arrived we were up, and after breakfast, which was the same as the meal the night before, we started together to hunt my ponies. He hitched up his farmteam and we drove in the direction the cyclone had gone. We traced it by the straw scattered over the prairie. Animals, if loose, will never go against the wind, always with it to save their lives. We traveled about five or six miles and met a farmer who came from his home to examine his ruined barn. We asked him if he had seen any ponies, Dakota bronchos, with harness on. He answered, "No". We assisted this farmer who lost all his horses, six in number, to extricate a calf out of the debris. Having done this we proceeded on our hunt. We passed several strawstacks, finally we saw one moving slightly and thought there they must be, and

sure enough they were eating the straw in the stack into which they had buried themselves and saved their lives.

Now why did I have to go through this storm and all the excitement? Through that storm in which I almost lost my life, I became acquainted with those people. I asked them if they would invite all the farmers and their families in the surrounding section of from 10 to 15 miles to come together on a certain day and I would conduct a service. They consented gladly. For a year I held services in a schoolhouse which was centrally located and believe it or not, the people came every two weeks for services and some came a distance of 20 miles. In the course of time these people

A CLOSE-UP VIEW OF SNOWPLOW — 1896 TO 1897

built a neat little church which was dedicated. The congregation multiplied and now a parsonage is built beside the church and a resident Lutheran pastor is living in their midst. I met the pastor of this congregation, and he told me the people still say, "God through a cyclone started our congregation".

On my way home after that cyclone, I could plainly see the path it had taken, I passed a place where house and barn had been reduced to kindling wood. Not a soul was to be seen, not an animal nor even a cat or chicken. Traveling two miles toward home, I stopped at a farmhouse and inquired whether anyone had been injured two miles west, where the house and barn were totally destroyed. They replied, the father and mother and three children were killed but the little baby which slept in its cradle was carried a half mile away by the storm without a scratch, sound and hearty they picked it up and took it home. I tied my ponies and went into the house and found as they said. I shall never forget the sad picture. When I was ready to leave for I had between 10 and 12 miles to go to reach home, I desired to see whether the cyclone had struck it one man stepped out with me and asked me whether I knew a preacher in my neighborhood. How surprised he was when I told him that I was a minister myself. Then he asked me if I would preach the funeral for the five. This man was a

brother to the dead man. I consented. I never in all my ministry conducted a sadder funeral than that. The father and mother in one grave, the three little ones in the midst of their parents.

This deed was made known over the surrounding country and aided me greatly in my mission work. I gained the confidence of the people, a number of formerly non-Lutherans and well may it be surmised, non-Christians became good and faithful church members. This part of my experience in the first year of my mission work is as fresh in my mind as though it happened recently. The long winter months of bitter cold are as cold as the few summer months are hot. Frost is possible every month of the year, especially after a hailstorm it gets cold for a few days. We attended a Fourth of July celebration and fur coats felt comfortable—ice cream would not sell. Furthermore as dry as it is in summer, so wet is the winter. Snow, sleet, snowdrifts, snowstorms, blizzards, real blizzards. It is impossible to describe a Dakota blizzard, you must see it yourself, yet you can not see it, nothing can be seen but a blanket of white snow. If a person is caught outside in a blizzard, he is doomed. The following will prove this: A member of one of my congregations went out to feed his hogs, he had buckets filled with bran and corn in both hands. Suddenly the blizzard came upon him. He searched for his home, was near the door but missed it and walked and walked. He never fed his hogs, but was found 30 miles from home, still holding the two buckets—dead. I buried him.

Another member was returning from his son's home to his own, while on the way he was overtaken by a blizzard. His son had begged him not to venture out as it was dangerous, but it was not even a mile to his home so he left for his home. He never reached there, they brought him home but he was alive. He later told his family and me that he had walked for hours trying to find his home or the home of his son. He was ready to lie down in the snow and die, but worried over the fact that no one would find him until the snow melted away. When he took a few more steps he felt an obstacle in his way—it proved to be a strawstack. "Thank God!" he dug himself into the strawstack. It was so cold he had to keep moving inside the strawstack, hunger came but no sleep. That blizzard lasted five then he crept to an opening to see whether the blizzard had blown over, then he crept to an opening to see whether the blizzard had blown over. and in so doing he froze his right hand. It could not be saved but had to be amputated. When the blizzard had subsided, they searched for their father all day and all night. Five miles away from his home a farmer getting straw from that stack for bedding for his cattle noticed something peculiar inside the stack. He dug in and to his surprise found the man, so feeble he could not walk nor scarcely talk. The strawstack saved him—God led him to it.

One of our missionaries lost his dear wife in a blizzard. He had gone to attend a conference and she stayed with her parents during his absence. They lived only a quarter of a mile from the parsonage. A blizzard which came up during that time lasted four days. On the fourth day the sun peeped out a little at noon and the little church could be seen. She decided to go home and see whether the ponies and the cow had some feed. She fed them and started for home, but she never reached it. On her way the blizzard started again so vehemently that she was unable to reach her parents home. She was found in the deep snow. dead.

One of my saddest experiences and the most gruesome sight I ever witnessed, was, when after a 5 day tremendously cold blizzard, we found in

a public schoolhouse the teacher, a sweet girl, and 15 school children—the entire school—frozen to death. The big boys could not even get to the near by coalshed to get coal; they had broken up benches and torn up part of the floor and burned it and had worked until exhausted. We found the teacher at her desk, a song book open , and the hymn marked: "Last hymn sung by us". It was: "Nearer, My God to Thee". Are they in heaven? Most certainly. I buried six of the children. That was some experience. A year after I showed my wife that schoolhouse.

A young couple, with their first baby, were visiting the young mother's parents who lived a few miles from their home. On their way home they were over taken by a blizzard. On the ground was about a foot of snow. They were riding in a sled. The Dakota sleds are mostly hand made. A drygoods box of large size put on runners made of 12 x2 in. planks, a wagon tongue and that completes the sled. A few armfulls of straw is thrown into the box, plenty of blankets of genuine wool (mine cost $15.00), fur coats for women as well as men and zero weather can do no harm but a blizzard will, if you are caught in it. When this young couple could not find their home, the young man saved the horses by unhitching them and turning them loose. They will travel for miles until they find a strawstack to dig themselves into. They will not do so while hitched to a sled or any other vehicle, only when left to themselves. After the young man had turned his team loose he began to pile heaps of snow around the box sled, covered his wife up well, she holding the little baby girl close to her bosom. The young man even took off his fur coat and spread it over wife and child and then to keep the wind from blowing the covers off, he laid on top of it. How did we find them after a day and a night? The father and mother dead, the little infant still alive, but getting cold. The grandparents took the little one and raised it. When I attended a Walther League convention held in Detroit, a young lady came up to me and asked me if I had done mission work in South Dakota. I said "Yes, I did, many years ago". She said "Do you remember of baptizing a baby called the blizzard baby whose parents died in a blizzard and the baby was found alive?" "Yes, I do," I replied. She said "I am the blizzard baby" and tears came to her eyes. What a pleasant meeting we had there in Detroit.

My Own First Experience of a Dakota Blizzard.

It was on a Sunday in the middle of November, 1892, around my birthday. I often thought if I had died then I would be in heaven. I had conducted services in the forenoon at the congregation in Willard, South Dakota, then called Mellett. In the afternoon I drove 20 miles to my mission place near Ipswich and conducted services there. At noon a drizzling rain started, the wind was in the southwest, comfortably warm. After services and lunch it was four o'clock. I made signs to return home about 22 miles that evening. The next day I was to leave by train for a conference about 200 miles south. The old settler with whom I stayed said to me, "You better stay here, you are not going to risk your life by returning. You are not acquainted with weather conditions out here." I replied, "If I stay here over night, I shall miss conference" and that settled it. I left, but should have taken the good old man's advice—I did not get to the conference anyway. I had never returned that way before; the whole country was strange to me, but my ponies had traveled that way quite frequently with my predecessor. I started out, the weather was calm, no wind whatever. The prairie ocean was calm, no snow on the

ground. Suddenly, like a cannon ball shot out of a cannon, came roaring a Northwestern, like a hurricane. A terrible blizzard! Soon I could not see my ponies in front of me, my buggy, my eyes, my face, the whole top in front of me packed with snow, and the wind howling and blowing, it seemed as though the wind would blow my buggy over or on top of my ponies any minute. I could not see anything any more. There I was, 20 miles from home on the lonesome prairie, dependent on God and my ponies. It got tremendously cold. My hands and face became cold, but not my feet, they were buried under a foot of snow in ten minutes. Mark well, only the ponies knew the way. They traveled very slowly, they could not go fast. The snow became deeper and deeper and drifted in places. I noticed one side of the buggy went up and the other down. Where was I going? Where would I land? Oh, why did I not take that good man's advice, he knew what was coming. I was headed due east, the blizzard came from the northwest, my luck, as long as the snow passed between my ponies and me, I knew they were headed in the right direction. But, if the ponies should turn and go with the wind to save their own lives, mine was doomed. I had been told they very seldom do that when hitched. Another thought came to me, what if the ponies should miss the turn into my place and keep on going east; where would I land if I would land at all before freezing to death? I had one consoling thought, about six miles from my home toward the east, I would strike the tracks of the Milwaukee Northwestern and certainly would notice that by sound, then I would turn to the right and strike Mansfield. So it went on and on. I could not look at my watch, at nothing. There, what is that? What happened? My ponies turned and are going with the wind! Good Lord, help, for I am lost! They instinctively decided to save themselves. I talked to them, but with the howling wind and their ears full of snow, they probably did not hear. I pulled a little on the lines to turn them east again but they did not respond. This went on a little while, and then, Oh joy! They turned and righted themselves, going due east, but only for a short while, then they turned due north against the wind, blizzard and snow. What should I do? I let them alone and that was wise of me. If they continued to go north 15 minutes I would have been smothered to death or frozen. Thank God, the ponies righted themselves and turned due east again. I began to call for help. At the top of my voice I called as loud as I could but the blizzard, the howling wind drowned my voice. Afterwards traveling that same route I saw that if I had the voice of a hundred ocean liner's fog sirens, it would not have been heard by any one, for not a single man lived along that 22 mile stretch. Splash, splash I heard my ponies break through ice and walk through water, it was soon over. Oh my, oh my, if I ever was prepared to die it was then, believe me I prayed, and the Lord saved me through my faithful ponies and a dog. The time seemed an eternity. I felt easier because the blizzard snow passed between my top and the ponies again assuring me we were headed in the right direction. A real Northwestern never changes its course until blown to an end. How long it went on in the terrible blizzard I could not tell. Now, the ponies turned again and went with the storm. I felt the storm pushing the ponies at times. The storm had increased in velocity to such an extent it seemed as though I was near my death. The ponies stopped still. Were they exhausted and lying down, or what happened to them? I pulled on the lines a little, my hands were stiff from cold, and felt like I was going asleep. As long as you feel the pain of cold and frost you are alright, but they claim a man freezing to death, is like falling suddenly

into a sound sleep. It should be a very easy death, not being aware of anything, simply, falling asleep.

I heard myself calling aloud once or twice. The ponies did not move an inch. I awoke again and heard a dog bark. He kept this up for some time. Oh! what sweet music that barking dog was. It told me I was near a dwelling where people lived. Those people were awakened by the dog's continuous barking, he was inside the house of course. In such a blizzard not even dogs will be left outside. Soon I heard a voice calling, "Who is outside, someone caught in the blizzard?" I replied, "Yes, I am. Help!" He tried to find me, I was only a few yard from the housedoor. He came

FLOOD AFTER SNOW MELTED IN ABERDEEN, SOUTH DAKOTA — 1896 TO 1897

with a rope tied to his arm and held by a person inside the house. When he touched my faithful ponies, my saviors, he cried, "You pastor! This is a miracle." He led the ponies to their stable, signalling by the rope to the man inside for more rope. We felt our way to the stable, and would have missed it but for the ponies' instinct, for they smelled the barn. It took us some time to unhitch the ponies and put them in the barn and cover them with blankets.

I kissed those ponies for they brought me home safely. I then caught hold of the man that was holding the rope tight. He signalled for return, slowly we followed the rope which was being pulled in. Upon reaching the warm house, I dropped—fainting. The change from 30° below zero to 60° above inside the house was too sudden, but I soon revived. I was home. It was 11 o'clock P. M. Ordinary I made that trip in three hours and thirty minutes, but this seven hours.

The good people were sound asleep. The continuous barking of the dog woke the housefather, he wakened his son and the balance has been said I had to tell my story to them all and state my experiences. When I told them that the ponies had gone with the wind and gradually righted themselves again only to turn north against the storm and then east again, they said the ponies circled around Scatterwood Lake, three miles of a half circle. How well done by my ponies! About breaking through the ice and

going through water, they said, that was crossing Snake Creek. I found it to be so on my next trip over the same route. How wonderful did God Almighty save my life in that blizzard! Many people were caught in that very storm and perished, and more cattle perished then during the balance of the winter. I did not go to the conference the next day, no man ventured out for four days, and no trains for two weeks. They were snowbound. So much for the present concerning blizzards.

How God Prevented Me From Meeting With a Sad Accident.

It happened thus: I intended traveling 50 to 60 miles by train to explore a new missionfield. I had to drive to the station with my ponies, a

IN THE NEIGHBORHOOD OF LUTHERAN CHURCH IN ABERDEEN — 1897

distance of about seven miles from home. One of my ponies became frightened at some Russian thistle driven by the high wind across the prairie. When these thistles are full grown, they resemble a wagon wheel and come rolling along as swiftly as the wind carries them, rolling along on the ground. One of these struck one of the ponies—he jumped and tore a strap off the harness. I mended it as well as I could in a hurry and drove on again. It tore again and would not hold. Finally, I approached the station and just as I reached it, the train which I was to take, pulled out of the station—the only train I ever missed! My people all know, that I am on time, yes, even an hour or a half ahead of time. That train which I missed, plunged through a defective bridge and many were seriously injured and killed. The great number killed were in the smoking car. I would probably have been among them either injured or killed. I thanked God for preventing me from boarding that fatal train.

Two Trips Never To Be Forgotten.

The first to the Black Hills where the President of the United States spent his summer vacation—Calvin Coolidge.

It was in October, 1892 when my partner and I set out with the ponies. There was no railroad from our section to the Black Hills. It took us four days and at night we camped out. We had sufficient supplies of food, but after the first night of camping, our supply of food was greatly diminished. Coyotes got into our buggy and helped themselves, but did not disturb us in our sleep. The third day we did not have a bit to eat and nowhere to get

a supply. My partner a man of 250 lbs. almost fainted because of hunger and I was hungry also. On the fourth day of our journey we struck the Black Hills and saw a log hut and stopped. A tough looking man came out and we asked for some food—much to our surprise he gave us whatever he had. We were willing to pay him, but he would not accept a penny. On Friday we reached our destination, and for the first time since leaving home we saw trees and woods again. While the state of South Dakota was a prohibition state, long before all states became dry; the people in the Black Hills were wet, very wet, open saloons in every village, town and city. In fact, the saloons were the largest buildings in the town, the only place

WATER ALL OVER — SCENE IN ABERDEEN, SOUTH DAKOTA — 1897

where men and women gathered and spent their time. So we went to a certain saloon in a town to meet some people and gather information. By the way, that saloonkeeper was not such a bad man, he was very kind to us and invited us to board with him free of charge—we did.

On Saturday we went around to invite people for services the following Sunday and the saloonkeeper mentioned it to every person who entered his saloon. His place was even kept open Sundays. When Sunday came, men and women arrived early. The saloon, the only meeting place in town was literally packed with all sort of Black Hill people. I opened the service and preached in English, then my partner followed with a sermon in German. One man, a cowboy, rough and tough looking, said after the service: "Men, that was a damn good sermon the Englishman gave us, let's fill this hat with a collection." He passed around the hat, counted the money $17.35, threw away some buttons, and put some cartridges which were also in his hat in his pocket. The saloonkeeper treated everyone to a glass of beer.

We organized a congregation and promised to supply them with a minister. This was done. If you should go to the Black Hills today, you

would find a large congregation with a church, parsonage and minister there. A Lutheran Sanitarium is also there.

Our return trip with one exception was a pleasant one. Our buggy broke down under the heavy weight of my partner. We had no ropes, no wire, but we saw wild grape vines long and strong and with them we mended the broken parts. We finally got home safe, and were glad of it. That is the beginning of the Lutheran Church in the Black Hill.

My Second Trip, Never To Be Forgotten, To North Dakota.

The week before Christmas in the year 1892, I went to NorthDakota. It was bitter cold, 30 to 40° below zero and I had a severe cold, felt bad. I took some cough medicine along and drank the contents of the whole bottle, but it did no good. I left Aberdeen, South Dakota in the evening on the Chicago Northwestern train over Oaks to Jamestown, North Dakota. This train was a mixed train—passenger and freight combined and stopped at every station all along the line. It was slow stopping to load and unload, to drop off a car and pick other cars up. We arrived at Jamestown at 2 A. M. The stove in the passenger car was kept red hot all the time and I sat behind it and sweat the cold out of my system.

In the Jamestown depot I saw for the first time real Indians. There were dozens of them in their own Indian blankets, conversing in their Indian language. I noticed how they ate raw meat and drank one cup of coffee after another. But though they were savages, they were harmless. About 4 A.M. the coast to coast Overland heavy train of the Northern Pacific Railroad came along drawn by two monstrous engines, which I boarded. It passed through Mandan and Bismark, the capital of North Dakota, and at Salem, I left that grand train. At Salem I had to wait in a general store where drygoods, groceries, shoes and hardware were for sale and while there a farmer and his wife came in. The wife bought a small necktie, a Christmas present for one of her sons and paid $1.50 for it. I thought it was too much to pay for a necktie, it appeared to be of less quality. From 10 A.M. to 2 P.M. I waited patiently for my man to arrive and he finally arrived in a double box lumber wagon, loaded with geese and ducks for the market. He had done his selling and trading and feeding his horses—three horses are a team there.

This was Friday, the last Friday before Christmas. We started out that afternoon, seated high up on a spring seat for a 70 mile trip. He lived 70 miles from the railroad, and had to travel that distance to the nearest town to trade. Although his horses kept up a lively trot, we reached our destination past midnight. This was the coldest trip I had made since that terrible blizzard. Our way led around a large mountain, the circle consisted of 20 miles and only made a headway of 6 miles. When the sun was in the west it was dark on the east side of the mountain at 3 P.M. but the mountains in North Dakota check the severe winds to some extent while it has a full sweep in the prairie. As soon as we had arrived at the farmhouse which was comfortable heated by North Dakota coals which are found on the surface, rather soft and smoky, we had an early breakfast—around 3 A.M. This farmhouse was also Uncle Sam's Post Office and a sort of stop over for farmers who lived still 50 miles farther away from Salem. The landlord showed me my room—he had one reserved for me out of three rooms which constituted the "hotel." Dozens of men were sleeping on the kitchen floor that night to start early for their homes. My room was the front room and spare room of the house but was filled with thousands of bushels of

wheat--North Dakota hard wheat from which the bread for the King of England is prepared. A ladder reached to the top of the wheat and a bed was made for me on top of that. No mattress, no springs, I had to crawl on hands and knees under a two foot space between the pile of wheat and the ceiling. There I slept like a log, solid and sound. The huge amount of wheat was not cold in the room, but to my surprise was warm. That wheat of Dakota furninshes the best flour in the world and the very best bread. Sleeping on top of thousands of bushels of wheat remind me of sleeping in a terribly cold night on top of a stove, the kitchen stove and it was heated too! How is this? Very simple! It was in a one-room huge house of a Russian family, built of sod, in one corner of the house the family had built a long stove about 7 ft. long and 3 ft. high of cobble stones and mortar and the fire of this stove was like a fire in a long furnace, the fuel consisted of dry cow chips. The raw manure when dry is mixed with straw and clay and water, and then dried again and cut up in large square blocks. It gives an enormous heat—cheap fuel for poor people. My bed was fixed on top of such a stove. The stove was the bedstead--on top of the stove or oven, square stones were placed and on these were boards and bedding. This was the warmest bed I ever slept in. On Saturday, I taught 30 children, in the public school house, their catechism, bible history and Christmas hymns. On Sunday I preached my first Christmas sermon--I still have it—and the whole congregation partook of Holy Communion. I remained there Monday and Tuesday and returned home Wednesday. According to my notebook I received a Christmas collection of $56.38 I have never met any more friendly, more sociable and kind people than those in North Dakota. There is now a thriving congregation, with a beautiful church, school and parsonage. A minister who served the Lutheran congregation at Preble, Adams County, Indiana, was pastor out there and his son for many years.

First Christmas Celebration In My Missionfield.

It lasted from the evening before the 25th of December until New Years. No Christmas tree to be had, so one was made. A pole of 8 ft. into which sticks were grafted and decorated with green paper, that was the tree. In Some congregations the Christmas tree had grown larger under the hands of the maker than in others, nevertheless, it resembled a tree. No glittering ornaments on the tree but candles which quite frequently started the paper burning. All kinds of decorated cookies, nuts, candy and apples were on the tree. After the usual Christmas program with the children, singing by the entire congregation, and they did sing those old familiar Christmas carols, the distribution of presents was next. Santa Claus came into the church, and what do you suppose he had in his sack? Not oranges and candy but something more precious and by far more appreciated— apples, apples! They were rare in Dakota; oranges came directly from Calfornia by carloads and were cheaper than anywhere else, but apples are steep in price and if you want to please a Dakota child, give him an apple.

In distributing and handing out Christmas presents, the minister was not overlooked. He received a box of cigars from every congregation and opening the box there appeared a $10.00 bill. A rich present from poor people for a poor missionary.

The Most Pleasant Of All My Trips and The Most Fatal.

It is the month of April, 1893. Conference was held in the southern part of the state. Every minister in South Dakota is a missionary because he

serves not only more than two, three, four or five cogregations, but is constantly exploring regions in his field. All the missionaries are glad to meet once or twice ayear for they live 50-60 miles apart. At the place of our meetings we would either sleep on the floor of a public schoolhouse or in a barn. Beds were gathered from members of the congregation. At the conference mentioned, we slept in a stable. One night it became unbearably cold, below zero, no sleep that night, but kept moving in our fur coats to keep warm. After this enjoyable conference I went south instead of north, not by mistake but intentionally according to a well made plan. My first stop was Omaha, Nebraska—there I paid a visit to my best college chum's parents. A day or two was sufficient spent in Omaha to see that hilly city. My destination was still farther south and the farther south, the more pleasant and fatal the trip.

The fastest and best train from Omaha to St. Louis, Mo. on the Burlington Railroad speeded me to my destination. One person was at the depot of St. Louis to meet me, no more, no less, it was my bride. That was my most pleasant trip of my life and on the 30th of April ended the most fatal trip, when I was married. On May 5th we left for Ft. Wayne, Indiana, my own home place, remaining there several weeks and departed for Chicago to take in, as our honeymoon, the World's Fair. We enjoyed the World's Fair immensely, one week, every day out on the fairgrounds, the White City, but did not see it all. At Chicago we boarded the train which took us to Aberdeen without changing. During the night we traveled through Illinois, Iowa and part way into South Dakota, during the day in Dakota. In the afternoon we passed through a section of my missionfield. I tried to show my young wife where my congregation and preaching places were located. She only replied: "I see nothing but prairie." It was true. At Aberdeen the entire small congregation met us at the depot, and upon our arrival in Mr. and Mrs. Jaenecke's home, were presented with a wedding gift.

The next day we bought our household goods, including the best gasoline stove on the market. Members from my Mansfield congregation had brought my ponies to Aberdeen and came with their farmwagons to take our furniture out to the home place. The newly built parsonage beside the little church had not been finished when we arrived. We had to move in an empty house of one of the members. Oh, the mice in that house, it was the headquarters of all in the whole county. They were so tame they could not be frightened away and at night they did their stunts and pranks even on our beds.

Those ignorant farmers who took our furniture out, left it stand outside of the house and although it had not rained for weeks, it did pour down on our new furniture that night. What a sight for a young bride—all her nice things drenched by rain! In no time it was dry in that Dakota heat, and never a sign of damage to be noticed. The next day was washday. No water on the place so I hitched the ponies, put a washboiler into the buggy with a large dipper, loaded my wife into the buggy and away we went to the next slue for water. Thus we lived for some weeks until the new parsonage was finished and ready to move into, which we gladly did.

The new parsonage was not large, still it had two rooms downstairs and a pantry, and three bedrooms upstairs. Later on a stormshanty was added The windows were protected from hail by solid shutters, like doors.

When starting out from Aberdeen to our new home with my wife, I remarked "what do you think of my ponies?" She answered, "Oh, how

proud I am, but this lonesome prairie!" She was in style with her hat; in those days ladies' hats resembled flowerbeds of all colors. But, oh my! The severe wind nipped one after another from her beautiful hat and carried it far over the prairie until no flowers remained. I had to laugh and said, "Now your hat is adapted to Dakota breeze." No more had I said that, when the wind blew my stiff "caty" off of my head and in no time it was out of sight. I never saw the hat again. She remarked, "I guess you are adapted also for Dakota."

The first place we stopped for dinner, was a member's house in the congregation about 18 miles southwest of Aberdeen. The house was of sod, the walls being from 2 to 3 ft. in thickness, the roof composed of shiplaps and covered with sod. The inside was plastered and papered. While the outside appeared to be a pile of dirt, the inside resembled an ordinary home. These sod houses had one advantage over other houses, it was always cool in the summer and warm in the winter, and you could never notice while inside what the weather was outside. You could not hear rain, hail or the howling wind. But one disadvantage—it would settle every year from one to two inches. Many of my members lived in these sod houses composed of a large room in the center and two small rooms on both sides.

We celebrated the Fourth of July at Scatterwood Lake around which my ponies went on that eventful blizzard night. The lake was practically dried up in summer, a few shrubs were at the banks, crowded with wild ducks in the season. It was so cold that we were compelled to wear fur coats. The temperature on the Fourth was near freezing and three days later on the 7th it was 115° in the shade, so sudden are the weather changes sometimes.

Serenaded By Choir and Did Not Notice It.

We had returned from the western trip, preaching three times on that Sunday. As soon as we reached the house, being dead tired from the terrible heat and dust, we immediately retired and fell sound asleep. I had a male choir. The choir had come to serenade us. They told us that they sang at the pitch of their voices. We could not be awakened and did not know that they sang under our window until they told us so. They were for some time of the opinion that we did not want them, that they were not welcomed. Did ever such a thing happen before or thereafter? Don't laugh!

CHAPTER III

Second Year Of My Mission Work In South Dakota.

My pony named Minnie became sick and could not do the work anymore. Poor Minnie, from the time of that terrible blizzard she began to fail, she was put on pasture and given a rest, well deserved. Hans was put in her place.

In June I went to Synod in Minneapolis and left my young wife with the wife of a neighbor pastor, 45 miles from our home. While there she experienced her first cyclone, while we were at Synod. The cyclone had lifted the church from its foundation, demolished the sheds in which the members put their horses during the services, had injured section hands who had taken shelter under the sheds, but left the parsonage in unharmed condition. God saved the wives of his servants.

At that Synod of the Minnesota and Dakota District I presented five (5) voting congregations to Synod; Mansfield, Northville, Aberdeen, Wecota,

and Ashton congregations. Amid cheers and applause they were accepted. The president of the District declared, "Never in the history of Synod were so many congregations presented by one man." Every missionary had to make a verbal report of his work and accomplishment in his field. So my report was of such a nature to please the Synod to such an extent, that it was unanimously decided to give me an assistant in the person of a student. In September the student arrived and he was a great help to me, supported by the Mission Board.

Some Happenings Of Sad and Joyous Nature During The Summer, 1893.

An old mother came to live in South Dakota on the lonesome prairie with her only child, a son, and only relative. The son left one day to find work outside of the state—he never returned. The old mother did not give up hope for his return. She made and re made his bed every day. She kept a few chickens and the neighbors took care of her. A member of my congregation near Wecota, sent his sons with horse and buggy every Sunday morning to bring her to services, whenever we had services, every two weeks. So she was in services on a Sunday in June. The following Sunday there was no service. She must have died on that Sunday or even before, and she would often mention that some day they would find her dead. Neighbors, who had not seen her for several days, but thinking she stayed with the member who always sent for her to go to services, which she sometimes did. Upon investigating they found the poor old mother on her bed, dead and decayed. The undertaker could not touch the body but place it in a coffin with bedding and all. The funeral service was held immediately. Of course the corpse could not be taken inside the church but was left in the hearse. After the service, she was intered in her grave. When I returned home I had to leave my books and gown outside because of the offensive odor still in them from the decayed body. It was one of my funerals always imprinted in my memory.

The first year of our marriage my wife would accompany me on my trips every Saturday and Sunday. On one occasion we were driving out west on Saturday afternoon. The wind was fierce, I had lit my pipe, but the wind blew so terribly that a spark lit on the laprobe and burnt a hole through it and into my wife's dress. She felt the fire and I stopped immediately and extinguished it. The only time I set my wife afire, never there-after.

The members of my congregation would supply us with food to a great extent. We never bought potatoes, and the Dakota potatoes have all the potatoes beaten by far in the world. The potatoes were so cheap, the farmers only dug as many as they needed, the rest were left in the ground. We bought no flour or meat in the winter. One brought a whole pig, another a quarter of beef for Thanksgiving. Meat was cheap; pork was 85¢ a hundred, wheat 30 and 35¢. The year 1893 was a year of depression in our country, but fuel was high—hardcoal $16.00 per ton, gasolene 25¢ a gallon, coal oil 20¢ a gallon, clothing and shoes were high too. Eggs were 5¢ a dozen, butter 6¢ a pound. Two bachelors, Jim and Charles, brothers, supplied us with eggs, they were honest-to-goodness neighbors. To prove their honesty, they discovered they had overcharged us a penny, immediately both came and as poor sinners would repent of accepting too much money and brought the one penny back. Honesty! Charles and Jim loved to come over and spend the lonesome evenings with us. They were quite good musicians and we had some pleasant evenings.

Since I received no support from the mission funds, the Board on Missions declared all money taken in by me in my missionfield was my property. All salaries $400.00 per year paid every 12 months, all collections taken in was my property and support. So I turned all collections taken in the second year over to my wife, she purchased a reed organ from the Hinnes Organ Co., Pekin, Illinois, the balance of our savings since the banks were closed, were frozen up not only in zero temperature, but also in summer heat of 115° in the shade; we buried it in the cellar, no more money buried thereafter.

On one of my trips, my wife experienced some unusual things. We stayed with a member who had a one room house, he and his wife and two children, one bed and a trundle bed for the children. Where did we sleep? A ladder led up into the loft of the house. We had to climb up that ladder and once up could not stand erect, but were compelled to undress while on our knees, but oh, how we slept! At anothers member's house, we had a soft bed in a comfortable bedroom. Soon after we had retired, I noticed that my better half could not go to sleep, but romped around in bed from one side to the other. Upon my question "Whats the mater?" She replied, "I believe there are bedbugs in this bed." We made a light and sure enough she was right. I could sleep, for they never touched me, but my wife could not sleep all night. In the morning the lady of the house asked her, "Haben dich auch die wanzen gebissen" ("Did the bedbugs bite you?") She answered, "No."

A missionary must be prepared for all kinds of emergencies. Two weeks ahead I had announced confirmation of twelve children, and after the confirmation, celebration of Holy Comunion. When I arrived after a trip of 25 miles at the church, what did I find? First, there was a corpse in front of the altar, some old grandmother whom I had given private communion two weeks before, had passed away. Second, there was in the front seat a young couple ready to enter holy wedlock. Third, five mothers with their babies, to be baptized and then there was the confirmation and Holy Communion. What to do first? Should I drop some parts, or go through the entire program? I decided on the latter. At 2 P.M. I was due to preach at Ipswich, and would not get through with all the work here and travel 20 miles to Ipiswich. So the first thing I did was to dispatch a young man with a fast horse to go and notify the people to wait for me until 4 P.M. The second on the program was the funeral service with songs and sermon and burial. The third was baptism of the five babies; a song preceded the baptismal service. Fourth, a song for the couple to be married, then the marriage preformed. Fifth, examination of the confirmation class, address, song and confirmation. Sixth, confessional service with short address, seventh, regular service with songs and sermon. Eight, celebration of Holy Communion, all took part, the newly confirmed, their parents, sponsors, the five mothers with babies in arms, the newly married couple, the benediction and song for conclusion ended this never to be forgotten service. We started at 9:30 A. M. and it lasted until 2:30 P.M. After the service we were invited to the home of the young bride's parents which happened to be on my way to Ipswich. In my memorandum I put down that no more has ever been taken in on a single day than this,$186.50, for salary, funeral, baptism, marriage, confirmation and collection. After a sumptuous wedding dinner, I immediately departed for Ipswich and arrived there at 4:30. Everyone remained, I held only a short service, noticing my voice had given out. Is it a wonder? I remained at Ipswich that night.

I was invited to preach at a mission festival in the congregation at Bowdel, about 90 miles from Mansfield the way I was to take over Roscoe. Starting out early Saturday morning I drove to Roscoe, there I put up my ponies in a livery barn. I asked them what people there were here. They replied, "Good people." I asked them to what church they went and they answered, "Lutheran." I asked them to prove it. One went to his house, who was a resident of the city, and upon his return produced a German hymnal. I went to my buggy and got my hymnal and handed both to them, they were identical. The question, who their pastorwas and how often he served them. They replied, telling the name of the minister and that he came every six months. Mark it, he had such a distance to travel that he was able to serve them only every half year. Those people wanted to extend a call to me that same day, but this could not be done as it would not be fair to their minister. I applied the golden rule reversed: "What you would not people do unto you, do you not unto them." I would not have any minister swipe one of my congregations in my absence from me, so I would not and could not serve them as their minister. In the course of time this small congregation in Roscoe had word from their minister, stating because of his failing health he would resign, and was glad if some Lutheran minister would serve them. Thereupon I accepted Roscoe and preached there regularly every month until my assistant arrived, then every two weeks. I made a round trip of 90 mles wth my ponies from 2 A.M. starting time and arrived home at 11 P.M. the same day and preached at 3 different places. Some work! In the winter, fearing blizzards, I would take the train from Aberdeen or from Wecota, the trains, mixed trains of course, would run only every other day and sometimes every three days. Once I was through at Roscoe at noon, got there from Aberdeen on Saturday by train, but no train on Monday, much less on Sunday, so what could I do but wait until Tuesday, probably until Wednesday. On that Sunday an engine and baggage car and a coach came to Roscoe in the afternoon going to Eurika and then returned to Aberdeen. Upon inquiry at the station the ticket agent informed me it was the superintendent's car. He and his staff are going over that section of the Milwaukee, St. Paul, R.R. line. Would he take me to Aberdeen? The agent said, "I will speak to the conductor upon their return in an hour and a half". He did and the superintendent invited me into his private car. A luxurious car. I dined with him, had a drink and cigar. That was certainly a treat.

In Danger of My Life Among The Indians

My partner, the most corpulent and weighty missionary ever in a mission field, whose buggy was made extra strong, and I, were obeying orders of the Mission Board to explore the northern part beyond the Indian Reservation. To get to our destination, we had to pass through this reservation. All went well going there, we passed through the Indian Villages unharmed, yes, almost unoticed, and found some families scattered over quite a large territory. We called on some of them and gathered them to establish a preaching place. A fine congregation was founded there with a resident pastor who built a good sized church. On our return, in passing through the Sisseton reservation, we almost put our lives in danger of being scalped. The trip was made in March, 1893. We started out early in the morning, but because of the fog and the sun hidden by heavy dark clouds, we got off of our direct route south. In the afternoon it began to snow around 3 P.M. and we decided to stop at the next Indian village for

the night. So we did. As soon as we halted the Indians swarmed around us, some unhitched our ponies, others grabbed our blankets and sachels and in no time had emptied our rig. We thought that this was a fine friendly deed of our red brothers. Until an old squaw came up to us and pointed towards the south and towards the sun, for no one could speak the English language and we could not speak theirs. The squaw gesticulated and tore away from the other Indians our blankets and luggage and motioned to hitch up and leave the village. We did, and she saved our lives. When we were on our way out of the village, we tried to figure out the meaning of her signs. We explained to ourselves, she pointing south, there is another village, she point- to the sun, meant it is yet time before darkness to reach the village. We traveled as fast as our ponies could go, no village in sight. Darkness was threatening and although according to our compass we were going due south. Every missionary carried a compass, there is no other way of telling in what direction you are traveling after sun down, as on a cloudy and foggy day, and it was too cold to camp outside, and besides our ponies had traveled nearly 100 miles that day. Finally we passed a sod home. Halt! Let us investigate. I approached the house and found the door locked. I struck a match and to my surprise read above the door, "M.E. Church". We decided the Indian village must not be far away. We had gone about a half mile when we struck the village. These Indians spoke broken English and could understand us. We put up our ponies, and a squaw prepared a meal for us. We were so hungry that it tasted real good—corn bread and rabbit. We told them of our experience north of their village. They said that we would not have come out of that village alive the next morning. Angered by U. S. agents who cheated them out of their government allowance, they decided to scalp every paleface they could get hold of. A missionary was killed by them a few years ago and some of their male Indians were shot to death by government officers, but not the real murders were excuted. We were treated friendly by these Indians. They had accepted the Gospel—that made the change. The next morning we offered them money and did give some to the good squaw who treated us the best she knew, but the men refused to take money so we gave them tobacco. How thankful they were! We arrived at home safely, thanking God that He spared our life and saved us through a squaw. These Indians mostly lived in sod and log houses. This fact was published many years ago in one of our church papers.

Before I shall go on with the narration of my experiences in the mission field of South Dakota, I will mention the entire field which I covered alone, and the congregations with their pastors of the years 1931 and 1932.

1. Mansfield, South Dakota, Rev. C. F. Kellermann—215 souls.
. Chelsea, South Dakota, Rev. C. F. Kellermann—62 souls.
2. Aberdeen, South Dakota, Rev. F. J. Graeber—300 souls
3. Aberdeen, South Dakota, 13 miles southwest (formerly Rudolph)
4. Aberdeen, South Dakota, Rev. F. T. Eggert—236 souls.
5. Ipswich, South Dakota, Rev. R. F. Gaunn.
6. Wecota, South Dakota, Rev. A. Szegedin—138 souls.
7. Roscoe, South Dakota, Rev. J, P. Scherf.
8. Hot Springs, South Dakota, Rev. A. C. Scholtz.
9. Lebanon, South Dakota, Rev. Th. Schroeder.

Hot Springs was only visited by my weighty partner and myself. After the third year of my service the mission field was divided in half, the western half was served by Rev. William Myer, and I kept the eastern half.

An Expensive Company, November 1893.

My good partner, weighing 250 lbs. paid us a visit. He was still a bachelor. He had an appetite not equaled by any man on earth. My wife had to cook and bake every day while he was with us. Twelve potatoe dumplings was nothing for him to eat at one meal beside two pounds of steak. Not a piece of our furniture was left whole. The sofa, a wedding present, had proven too weak for the 250 lbs. and broke down beyond repair; my office chair, a Christmas present, shared the same fate; the best bedstead in the house was too weak also, not only the springs broke but also the bedslats broke under the heavy weight of our precious guest. He has long ago gone to a better place.

Another expensive guest. Conference decided that each missionary in order to draw more Lutheran people to South Dakota, should put an ad in the paper describing the opportunity they would have in this wonderful country. This I did. In a few weeks a man came who read my ad and wanted to explore the country and the opportunity, and then his family would follow. Well he became a houseguest for several weeks, ate and slept like a prince and smoked nearly a box of my good cigars. Whenever I had time I would take him from place to place to show him the wonderful opportunities awaiting him. We furnished him with a house and home; had a stove engaged and furniture gathered. He was having his family come, fine country, fine people, but no family came. Who was he, what was he? A regular tramp. In what danger my young wife was, being with this tramp all alone many a day in that lonesome prairie and I on my trips many miles away.. When we speak of this, we often wonder how God Almighty prevented her from harm. Another tramp came to our house. I was absent and he wanted a pair of old trousers. My young, good hearted wife handed him a pair of my trousers with $4.00 in dimes in them. Of course she knew nothing of the money as I always kept the dimes in the little watchpocket. Well I suppose the dimes did not hurt that tramp any.

Before I shall enter upon the third year of my missionwork in South Dakota, I will conclude this chapter by a poem composed by our good neighbor, bachelors, Jim and Charley. I still have the orginal in their own handwriting. Here it is:

"Verse of a song sung at a Fourth of July celebration at Scatterwood Lake, 1893."

I've reached the land of drought and heat
Where nothing grows for man to eat,
We do not live, we only stay,
We are too poor to move away.
Oh, Dakota land, sweet Dakota land,
As on thy burning soil I stand
And wonder why it never rains.
Till Grabriel blows with trumpet sound,
And says: "The rains have gone around".

This poem pictures the situation in a few words.

CHAPTER IV.

Third Year In My Mission Work In South Dakota.

The student who was my assistant in my vast missionfield, and I would change about on our trips. If he went the eastern trip I took the western. If he took the western trip I took the northwest to Ipswich, Roscoe, Eurika

and return covering over 100 miles. I made this trip with ponies generally in two days, but once in one day. Starting before sunrise, preaching three times at three different places then returning home arrived at 11 P. M. I was surely tired, so were the ponies—the only time they remained tame for one week. On such long trips, over stony prairies, the ponies were fed but a handful of hay but plenty of oats. All this had to be experienced by a missionary. Once the student took me to Ipswich to board a train for Roscoe and Eurika. It was so early in the morning it had not become daylight. I was to be at Ipswich at 5 A.M. to catch that only train west. It came along every other day. Well, I forgot to take my compass along and we had soon lost our direction and were going all wrong in a different direction. We were practically lost in the prairie. You can not find your way if you are once lost, you have no marks to go by on your first trip over a prairie. We went on, and the stars in heaven were our guide, but missed the station by ten miles. Just as we arrived there, the train pulled into the station, luckly it was a mixed train and a good deal of loading and unloading and swich-had to be done. I made it alright—always on time!

During my stay in Dakota every year new immigrants from Germany came over and landed in South Dakota. The first thing the men did when they had come was to take naturalization papers out to become citizens as soon as possible. The main reason was this—without their papers they could not take out a claim. What is a claim and how is it to be gotten? A claim is 160 acres of land. Any person male or female could take up a claim. At the courthouse of every county you would make your claim, pay $12.00 and the U.S. government would give you a title or deed on your 160 acres. You were only required to build a shanty on your claim, cultivate 10 acres, then the 160 acres were yours. Besides these 160 acres you would get 160 acres more, a so called "tree claim". The government would furnish you with tree seed and all you had to do was to break up 10 acres on the claim and plant the seed, therafter you were given a deed for another 160 acres.

I had the opportunity to take up a claim and a tree slaim. My wife could do the same thing and we had the money to do so, but we did not wish to possess a section of that Dakota prairie. The improved land out there would sell for 50¢ to$7.00 per acre.

At one time 33 persons came together to Mansfield from Germany. These people men, women and children did not know how to act at first. At the table they would take the whole piece of meat on their forks and eat it from the fork. They were surprized at the abundance of meat the American people ate and were more surprised that we had cakes at every meal, for they took our white bread for cake which they only received on Sundays in Germany, on other days they ate black bread called pumpernickle. A bride and bridegroom came along with them and I preformed their marriage. I noticed the bride had a beautiful wedding dress. Asking for a piece of the goods, I took it to Aberdeen and showed it to one of the leading drygoods merchants there and asked what the price of the material was. He replied "You can not buy that goods in America." He said he would send to Germany for the goods if I so desired and it would come to about $20.00 a yard. I did not desire any of course.

Among these immigrants, there was an especially good looking young girl of about 18 years. She lived with her parents and one brother, twelve miles from the Mansfield parsonage One day a rig drove up to the par-

sonage and a young man and woman came in. I knew them both—the young lady was that good looking German girl, the young man was a wicked cowboy who had misled several young girls, married them and after some time disappeared. I was told he had also murdered a person. Now I knew, if this young girl knew what I knew she would not want to marry him. He had rolls of money that caught the eye of the girl who had only been in this country several months. The great amount of money which he had displayed before the eyes of the girl's parents caused them to give their consent to the marriage of their daughter. They could not speak a word of English, but the cowboy had picked up enough German words to make them understand what he desired. Did I preform that marriage? I did not, nor was it ever performed. When I hesitated to go on with the marriage, he showed me several $20 bills to bribe me. I did not say anything to the cowboy, but spoke to the young girl in her language, Low German. I told her about the young man. She wept and my wife in the other room motioned to me to go on and perform the ceremony. They left and the cowboy in passing said to me "You will suffer for this when I get you." As soon as they were gone I hitched up my ponies and drove to the parents of the young lady, taking a different route than the young couple did and my two ponies could travel much faster than his one in his old rickety rig. I explained the situation to them. They of course did not know what to say but I advised the young brother to go to Aberdeen immediately and notify the sheriff of the fact that the cowboy whom they wanted and searched for had appeared. So he did. The sheriff came with his deputy, arrested him and put him into prison. He got his trial for murder and was sentenced to from 10 to 25 years in prison. The parents were so thankful to me they did not know how to show their appreciation that I refused to perform this marriage. The girl later married a good, honest young man and she would write a most beautiful letter to me every year and in every one there was a thousand thanks. Thus I broke up an engagement. Did I?

On a Monday, I returned from Aberdeen to my home at Mansfield and found that word had been left to go to Potter County, Township so and so, Range so and so, District so and so, Section so and so, about 70 miles southwest. I changed ponies, took my compass and went. I was told when I reached a big pile of stone I would be near my destination, there I was to give communion to an old mother and baptize her grandchild. It got dark, but I drove just up to the stonepile and soon was at the place, not a quarter of a mile did I go out of my route. I found as had been told me, did my official duty, and returned the next day. It was dark and heavy clouds hung low—a drizzly rain lasted all the day. In spite of my compass I missed my direction and went too far south. No house, no living soul to meet. After hours of traveling, I came to a small sod house, stopped at the front door and rapped. An Irish lady came to the door, but could not tell me which way to to go to reach Mansfield. I asked for a few matches and she slammed the door growling "to hell with those agents", taking me for an agent. She had probably had some sad experience with them. So I continued on my journey, knowing that I was going east, but getting too far south. After several hours drive I came upon another sod house. Upon my request for some matches and a drink of water, she replied, "Kann nicht verstehen". ("I can not understand you") Of course, I expressed myself in her language. How ready she was to comply with my request. She was so glad that someone came with whom she could talk. I unhitched the ponies and fed them

and she prepared a dinner. Her husband came from the field and then I heard a sad story. A prairie fire had burned down their farmhouse and all its contents, even the Bible, prayer book and hymnals, then they took me outside, near the house were three small graves. With tears in their eyes they told me how they had died, but being baptized by the father and buried by the parents, no other person present at the funerals but they and the remaining children. They said, "Oh if my mother would know in Germany what we are suffering in America, she would die of grief." They had two more little children and they wanted me to baptize them immediately. I asked them to wait two weeks and I would return again and conduct a service. They should invite some of their nearest neighbors which lived from 3 to 10 miles away from them. They agreed to do so. I reached home that Tuesday, late, very late. In two weeks I went there, about 35 miles from Mansfield, I baptized their children and had about 12 men and women and children as my audience for my first service there. I kept preaching at that newly found preaching station every two weeks until I left South Dakota. Now what is there? A good sized congregation, a neat little church and parsonage with their own minister. That is real mission work. Because I missed my route, because I had no more matches, God directed me to that certain place.

A German settlement was established. A band of about 5 men, 3 women and a number of boys and girls and little children. When I arrived at the settlement, they had erected a small house, one room, they were still working at it for it was not nearly finished. It was late in the evening when I arrived. "Where will we put the minister for the night?" Thus they disscussed their perplexing problem. Their floor was occupied by them sleeping beside each other, even the stove had to be moved outside to make room for sleepers. I told them not to worry on my account, my ponies were picked out and grazing leisurely. What does it mean to pick them out? Two long ropes were always in the buggy of every missionary, on one end of the rope was an iron stake attached, this stake was driven into the ground, the other end was attached to the halter of the ponies and then left to themselves. Sometimes they would break loose and get away, then in that case a rider on another pony would ride after them and catch them with a lasso. Every missionary was also carrying blankets and robes, and when cold weather came would take his furs along. A fur coat, fur laprobe. (I still have my fur laprobe of raccoon hide) fur cap and fur gloves or rather mittens. I suggested to the new settlers in that district, since the nearest town was about 15 miles away from their unfinished home, I would make my bed under my buggy. This did not materialize. They had another plan. They nailed brackets about 5 feet from the floor to one side of the house. Carried a wagon box into the house, lifted it on top of the brackets, put a pile of straw into it. My buggy seat was my pillow, my blankets my sheet and covering. Did I sleep? I should say, slept in the upper berth like in a Pullman and the balance of them slept in the lower berth.

Real, Welcome And Lasting Company Arrived In The Lonesome Prairie.

On February 4, 1894, the company arrived, our first child was born. It was on a Sunday afternoon when she arrived. It was bitter cold, snow and snowdrifts, were so high that I did not venture out on Saturday the 3rd of February to make my west trip but stayed at home. It was 38 below zero. Two hard coal stoves were going full blast, the large stove downstairs, the smaller stove upstairs. On Feburary 27th our little girl was baptized. We

had invited our nearest neighbors and Jim and Charley. Two of the neighbors were chosen as sponsors, besides the two living grandmothers, the one at Collinsville, Ill., the other at Decatur, Ind. Her name was given: Alma, Henrietta, Louise. The two latter names of her grandmother. The name Alma was taken from the Hebrew Bible, Isaiah, chapter 7, verse 14, Alma, meaning virgin. Real and lasting company. When she was 6 weeks old, she was taken along on our trips, bundled in warm fur. Once we took her to Mansfield in the cutter with the temperature 10° below zero. She was the only prairie baby of our children.

The years 1893 and 1895 passed by in the usual routine of life. Christmas of 1895 I had to play Santa Claus against my will. The Sunday before, I preached in Mansfield, in the afternoon in Rudolph, and in the evening at Aberdeen, as usual. On Monday I bought the Christmas presents, a whole load, my buggy was packed to the brim, only room for me. All went well until in the afternoon when I returned for home one of my shoes hurt my foot, toke off the shoe and put on my overshoe. About 12 miles from home I saw a new whip in the prairie, stopped and picked it up and when I was about to get into the buggy the ponies started for home in a slow trot. I tried to run after them to hold them, but no more had I caught up with them than they would start in a new trot. Now things began to tumble out of the top buggy, first my suit, then a doll, then my wife's gift. What could I do but pick them up and carry them in my arms. That was no fun with a heavy fur coat on and one shoe off, and loaded down with Santa Claus goods and to walk behind my buggy, for 12 long miles over a rough prairie. Well, I got home just at dusk. As soon as the ponies were at the house, my wife came out expecting me in the bugggy, but seeing me loaded down limping on behind, she laughed as never before and said, "It is a long time since I believed in Santa Claus, but I believe in him again." Thus I played Santa Claus against my will, nevertheless we had a Merry Christmas, my wife, Alma and I.

In the congregation, northeast of Mansfield, the Rudolf congregation, there was an ex-schoolteacher from Germany who caused me much trouble. To mention but one thing, whenever I had begun the melody of a song, he would start a different melody just to annoy me and disturb the service. This went on for sometime, I begged him to behave, he only laughed and said, "In Germany the melodies I sing are used, and the melodies you sing are not the right ones." I could not stop that teacher, he had it in for me because I refused to give him Holy Communion. He was married in America, but he drank so heavily, that his wife and children could not live with him, besides this, he had left a wife and two children in Germany without being divorced from her. So what did I do to get rid of my German teacher forever and for good? I told the story concerning him to one of the police in Aberdeen. "I will fix him," he said, "I will be out there in civil clothes at your next service." He was. Service began—I started a melody, the teacher started a different one. Twice he did that. At the close of that service, the police from Aberdeen went up to him and showed him his badge, took him to Aberdeen. That was the end of my annoying ex-schoolteacher from Germany. He never showed up thereafter.

In the near neighborhood of one of my preaching stations, there lived a German family, a father and mother and five children. They never attended services. I had invited them through members, but all in vain. I said, the next time I come I will go there my self. The members told

me it was no use to get him to come, he never was a churchman in Germany, he had thrown the minister out of his home in Germany. That did not prevent me from driving to his place. He never knew me nor did I know him. When I came to his place, I told him who I was, that quick he got mad and red in his face and ordered me from his place with the words, Pastoren und Narren fahren auf einem Karren." (Pastors and fools ride in one cart) His wife came to the door, I asked her if I could speak to her, at first she hesitated, but when her husband went growling to the barn, she invited me into the house. She was no more willing to come to services than he . She talked as blasphemously concerning religion as her husband did. The children, ranging from 1 year to 16 were shy and seemed to be afraid of me. I noticed the oldest girl was sickly, the cause I could not learn. None of the children were baptized; the wife made fun of baptism and expressed that she would rather have her children die than be baptized. Here was a house under the control of Satan. With a heavy heart I left. "Don't come any more." was their goodbye. Almost a year thereafter that oldest daughter was sick and dying. She begged one of my members, without her parents hearing it, to tell me that I should come. I went. I talked to her kindly and prayed with her. I had her say the little Bible verse repeatedly, "The blood of Jesus Christ, His Son, cleanses us from all sin." Shortly after that, she passed away, constantly repeating that little verse. The ice was broken. Satan had to depart. I was called to preach the funeral sermon and to officiate at the funeral. In my own estimation, I must say, I believe that I never preached a better funeral sermon. I avoided every sentence that might be taken as an insult. I still have that sermon in my desk. The next time I held services there, who was present? To my surprise and to the surprise of all the members, that blasphemous man, his wife and four children. They wanted their four children baptized. I did. From then on they were regular in service and paid well towards my salary. I was told after I had left South Dakota that that member was the biggest contributor towards their new church. How true the words of St. Paul, "I am not ashamed of the gospel of Jesus Christ, for it is a power unto salvation unto every one that believeth." That power of the Gospel, manifested itself here, and at how many other places? Glory be to God alone. There in the missionfield I learned to make sermons.

CHAPTER V.

Fourth Year of My Missionwork in South Dakota.

Up until now I served the entire missionfield with my student assistant. The large field was now divided into halves. Rev. William Myer taking the west and I keeping the eastern half. Rev. Myer lived at Mellette, now Wecota. He served besides Wecota, Ipswich, Roscoe, Eureka and Lebanon and Faulkton—the latter being the county seat of Faulk County. His field was spread over the counties of Faulk, Edmunds and Potter. My field comprised the counties of Spink and Brown. The ministers serving all my former places are, at this writing, in the year 1932, the following:

1. Rev. F. J. Graeber, Aberdeen, South Dakota.
2. Rev. E. T. Eggert, 13 miles southwest of Aberdeen.
3. Rev. C. F. Kellermann, Mansfield, South Dakota.
4. Rev. A. H. Senne, Spink Township, Spink County, South Dakota.
5. Rev. A. Szegedin, Faulk County, South Dakota.
6. Rev. R. F. Gaunn, Ipswich, South Dakota.

7. Rev. J. T. Scherf, Roscoe, South Dakota.
8. Rev. Th. Schroeder, Lebanon, South Dakota.
9. Rev. T. Buehner, Sisseton, South Dakota.
10. Rev. A. C. Scholtz, Hot Springs, South Dakota.
11. Rev. J. V. Richert, Bismark, North Dakota.
12. Rev. L. Wohlfeil, Hanover, North Dakota.

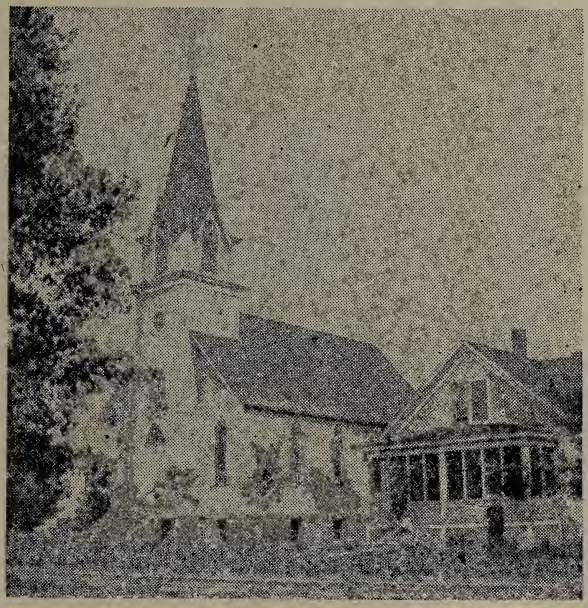
Lebanon, Sisseton, Hot Springs, Bismark, Mandan, and Hanover were only visited and explored and the way cleared for a successor. Certainly an enormously large territory to cover by buggy and sometimes by train.

Churches Built and Dedicated.

When I arrived in South Dakota in the year 1892 in August, the Mansfield congregation was the only one in possesion of a church. It was 16 by 24 feet with a tower. The first church I dedicated was built some years ago but stood out west, near the Missouri River, abandoned. There was at a time a large congregation that built the church, but years of drought came and the people were compelled to move away because of lack of water. The congregation at Wecota, then Millard, in Faulk County, decided to move the church over into their midst, and they did. With eight strong wagons upon which they loaded the entire church building, they pulled it over with twenty teams of horses. Some moving! Built a foundation and placed it on the foundation and remodeled the church inside, built an addition to it, with altar niche, and painted it white. It made a fine church, was neatly furnished. That same congregation built a horse barn near the church large enough to put up 25 teams, which they always did to have the horses sheltered during services. My ponies had a place in that church barn also. One member who lived 11 miles from the church had to start away from home Sunday morning at 5 o'clock, to be on time for service with his family. His ponies could not travel fast, they were a team of oxen. When I would arrive at the church I could see his oxen graze in the prairie. Who would do such a thing in our time, when buggies have vanished to make place for the automobile? Another member, an old father and his wife came also quite a distance in their top buggy pulled by an enormously large ox. I asked him once why he did not hitch a horse or a pony to the buggy. His reply was, "Old faithful Dick will not run away with us." It was too comical to see these old people come along in a buggy pulled by a huge ox and no lines to hold back the ox if he would even try to runaway. He never did. School-children, boys and girls as well would come to school riding horseback on their ponies, sometimes four and five children on one pony. And they would run races with each other. I tried to stop the racing but could not.

The largest and nicest church was built by the largest congregation of my congregations at Rudolf, thirteen miles southwest of Aberdeen. The members of the congregation did all the work themselves, the masons built the foundation, the carpenters the woodwork, the painters the painting. When it had been finished, I dedicated it and people who came for the dedication remarked, "Too nice a church to stand out here all alone in the prairie." I once came to that newly built church, 58° below zero. Six men were there—no women and children. They kept up a red hot stove. I did not change my fur coat with my gown, but preached my sermon in my fur coat and did not sweat either. That afternoon I intended to make Aberdeen, but they advised me to return home, which I did.

The winter of 1895 was severe. In my memorandum is noted every now and then from October, 1894 to May, 1895, blizzard, blizzard, deep snow, almost froze, wife and child almost froze in house, saved by student. Such few remarks tell a whole story. I made the west trip. A member of my congregation accompanied me. We were compelled to face a genuine northwestern out of Medicine Hat, Canada. We had dressed the warmest we could, all the furs we could carry, my member could hide even his face behind fur. After we had traveled about half way, my member began to freeze. He told me to whip up my ponies to save his life, if they would die, he would furnish me with another team. I whipped them up, they



CHURCH OF THE LUTHERAN CONGREGATION IN ABERDEEN, SOUTH DAKOTA — 1932

strained every nerve, they perspired, and the perspiration froze on their bodies. They were as white as snow, and icicles froze to their noses over a foot long. When we reached our destination the boys threw as fast as they could move all the blankets and furs on the ponies and hurried them into the warm stable, heated by 40 horses and as many head of cattle. They rubbed the ponies until they were dry. They were saved. We had to lead my member into the house, he was stiff from frost, he could not walk unassisted. When he came into the warm room he fell over and fainted. We took him out into the cold stormshanty, and rubbed him with snow until he came to himself. Eveybody thought he would die, but he lived, never to make a trip again with me in winter. That is the only time the stem of my smoke pipe froze.

The next day the boys took me to the station at Wecota, then Mellette, to board the train for Roscoe, where I was to perform a marriage, and conduct service, also baptize two children. I returned from Roscoe, still bitter cold, to conduct service at Wecota, where my nearly frozen member was staying. We had no more gotten into the house when a tremendous

blizzard left loose, and a cold one. It lasted five days until the weather settled down for a man to venture out. What happened at home while I was absent? Ithought of home and my dear ones all the time. It got so cold that my wife moved a bed near the stove, a hard coal burner, and a large one at that. There she and her little baby slept during the cold nights of that blizzard. One evening the blast in the stove became so hot that they turned the stove off altogether, the gas extinguished the fire in the stove during the early morning. My wife woke up she could scarcely call loud enough to waken the student who boarded with us. She felt the little baby. It was cold but still alive. The student came and built the fire. It took all forenoon to heat up one room of the house. God saved my wife and child from freezing to death in the house. When I arrived home, my little one was afraid of me because my cheeks had turned black from frost. Everything was frozen in the house—the bread, the eggs, the meat, the coffee in the coffeepot, the potatoes in the cellar, the canned goods, even the communion wine frozen solid.

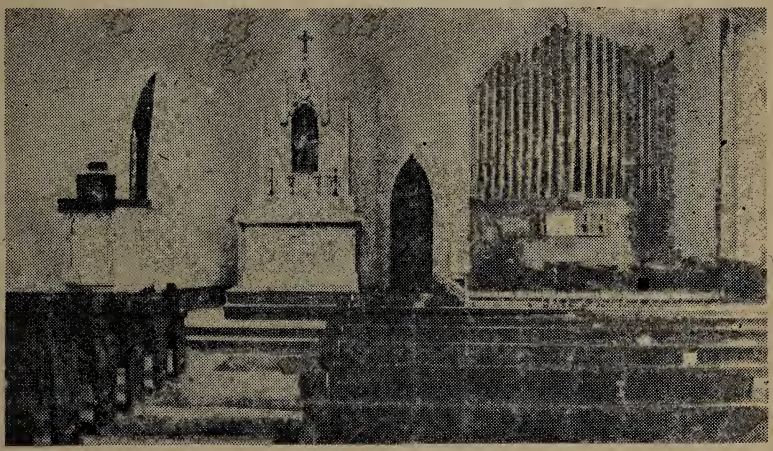
I noted in my note book "could not make trip on account of blizzard."

Once I came to the west and the members told me, "Do not come in such weather and put your life in danger." A funeral in such cold weather was no pleasure to be sure. The corpse would be taken from the house into the church. On the way it would freeze; in the church it would thaw out. In viewing it, it was a horrible sight—drops of water would gather on the countenance, making the corpse appear sweating or crying and shedding tears. Such things are not forgotten. I was visiting a sick member once, and it was winter, but no snow at the time yet. I tied my ponies to a hitching post, while I was in the house of the sick person the ponies tore loose, turned around and made for home. About two miles on their way home the top tore loose and fell off. They came home without top and driver. My wife was frightened, she thought they had run away with me again which they often did, and I had met with an accident because the top was off. Until she saw me straggling on behind.

The spring of the year 1895, the water all over the prairie, dried up creeks resembled rivers and lakes, especially did Scatterwood rise to such an extent that it overflowed the driveway through it which was marked by poles driven into the ground on each side as a guide. I took my wife and child to Rev. Meyer's house out west to keep company to his wife while Rev. Myer and I attended conference. He went along with me east and we boarded a train at Mansfield to go south several hundred miles. After we returned from conference I was to take him home again with my team and bring my wife and child back. The women did the most daring stunt in their life. Mrs. Myer and my wife wanted to surprise us. They did! The day before we arrived at home, those daring women called a neighbor to hitch up Rev. Myer's wild ponies—he had to tie them to a post to hitch them to a buggy. Mrs. Myer got in and took the lines, our little Alma was put in the buggy and then the ponies got loose. My wife had to jump into the buggy while they started on a fast trot and they ran, practically ran away, out of control of Mrs. Myer, but fortunately the ponies were directed east, they ran all the way like race horses until Scatterwood Lake when they got into three feet of water. Mrs. Myer guided them through the lake safely. When they reached our house at Mansfield, they called a neighbor to unhitch and put them into the stable. The next day to our surprise our daring women met us at the station. Mrs. Myer with

her team and my wife with her team. It is a miracle, that those Dakota missionaries' wives got away in their daring stunt without a scratch. You must bear in mind if those bronchos have a rest for only a few days, they become as wild as though they had never been broken.

One question you may ask: Where do they get those bronchos? Every year men come with a drove of hundreds and thousands of them, and anyone who wishes a pony or team or as many as he wants, goes to the herd and looks a number of them over and if he has made his selection a man with a lasso goes and lassoes the one picked. You get the pony for nothing, you only pay $12.00 for lassoeing the pony, put the bridle on it and if you



INTERIOR OF LUTHERAN CHURCH — A $3,000 ORGAN — IN ABERDEEN

have a halter, or a harness with you they will hitch him up and away you go, not knowing where you are going until the ponies know you are master, then you may, sometimes you may not, drive them home. Twelve dollars for a wild pony, $24.00 for a team. Rev. Myer got a matched team at that. If you wish to ride the wild pony, they will put your saddle on it and break it for riding, that costs $3.00 additional. It is fun and quite interesting to see those men handle those wild ponies. But where do they come from: You ask once more. Here is the answer: they grow wild, never see a barn or stable, wild life like all other wild animals in their native land, so these ponies that carry the missionaries around in the Dakota prairie grow and multiply on the prairie. They never become real tame and gentle, the wild blood always remains in them. Minnie, the one of my original ponies who got sick and was turned out on the prairie, was the most gentle of them all and she was wild enough to run away any time. These ponies are of little use on the farm, they cannot stand the hard work, but to run and pull a buggy they cannot be beaten, and the only way to keep them broken as near as possible is to make a trip every day. They certainly possess more instinct than the ordinary horse. If they for instance have traveled one way once, they will remember that way going the second time. That was the missionary's auto.

Snowbound — A Snowbound Train.

What is a snowbound train? Have you ever seen one? Were you ever on a snowbound train? No train was ever really snowbound in Indiana

as far as I know. In the West and Northwest it is a common thing. Every winter trains become snowbound. A real snowbound train cannot move anywhere, it cannot go forward nor backward. It must wait until the snowplow arrives and clears the tracks of snow. The snowdrifts are not only as high as a train sometimes, but the snow is frozen solid, no shovel can move it, it must be chopped loose. And whenever it snows in Dakota look out for drifts. I have not only seen snowbound trains, but also snowbound snowplows. A snowplow is a heavy constructed car with a monster of an engine which drives a huge wheel in front of the car. The wheel has shovels which grab the snow as it turns around swiftly and throws the snow to one side mountain high. The snow is thrown so swift that it demolishes the windows of a building, or restaurant, or depot a rod or two away from the track. If a passenger train is snowbound and also caught in a four to five day blizzard, then it is doomed, then you will see, after it arrives at the station, many of the passengers carried out of the cars, some unconscions, some with feet frozen, and some frozen to death. What a sight! Why could the passengers not keep warm? No fuel, no eats. I was on a snowbound train for two full days. We had fuel and no blizzard, but nothing to eat. Where will you go for something to eat in a prairie? The second day after being snowbound hunger drove us to go out and leave the train to look if we could not spy a sod house or a Dakota farmer. After walking 6 or 7 miles away from the train, we struck a shanty. The poor people could leave us have only one small loaf of bread, a few eggs and a little ham and bacon. Each passenger got a bite at least. It is no pleasure by any means to be on a snowbound train. The women of course and the children are taken care of first. But the question, "When will we move on again" is asked a hundred times, nobody knows. The snowplow cannot be everywhere at the same time, it may be a hundred or more miles away digging out some other snowbound train. Also the snowplow cannot move itself, it is pushed by a half dozen or even a dozen of powerful locomotives. For miles you can hear the roar and thunder when the snowplow approaches, that is good music for the passengers and also for the train crew. If a train is snowbound for two or three days, the coal on the tender is all consumed, the fire of the engine is out, the engine is dead. If the snowplow comes from the rear of train or from the front, it differs not, the plow must go back to a station, before another engine can be attached to the train to proceed on. It has happened, that a snowplow had cleared the tracks from snow up to the stalled train, returned to the nearest station, sidetracked, and an engine dispatched to get the stalled train, but the high winds had drifted the snow so deep that even one single engine got stalled. The snowplow had to go and come to keep the tracks clear. In traveling by train in Dakota and also in other northern states, you will see high board fences along the tracks, sometimes for miles and then you will see sheds built over the tracks, going through them seems like going through tunnels, they are snowbreaks, but no road can afford to build such snowbreaks along the entire road of hundreds of miles. Whenever a railroad track is cleared by a snowplow from snow, the snow in between the ties is packed so solid that nothing can break through, it bears anything. Such a track is the best road for sleighing. How often did I drive on the tracks of the Chicago, Northwestrn R.R. from Mansfield to Aberdeen! It is a pleasure to ride in a cutter with fast ponies, but look out when a train comes from behind, or if another comes along to meet you. The only thing to be done is to unhitch, throw the sled off the tracks, get aside with yonr

team. This I did quite often. When you read of snowbound trains, you cannot get a real picture of it, you must experience it yourself. As I said, it is no fun to be on a snowbound train, your life is in danger.

In march, 1895, the visitor of the district came to pay a friendly visit to the whole missionfield. He did not get far. He only visited the home congregation. On Monday he came, and that evening held services and spoke words of praise and encouragement. The next day we intended to make the western trip, the next day came and with it a majestic blizzard, such as we had never experienced before. It lasted until Saturday. A pile of snow blew through the keyhole inside of the house 3 ft. high. We were as

PARSONAGE OF LUTHERAN CONGREGATION IN ABERDEEN — 1932

in prison, no one dared to open the door, or much less to venture outside. Dear reader, you may ask, how could the housewife make a real meal every day from Sunday until Saturday, and not be able to go and get a bucket of water at the well? Well, like every Dakota family, we lay in a supply of food to last at least two or three weeks, and besides for meat there was always a supply of drssed jackrabbits on hand in frozen condition. Of these jackrabbits only the hams were eaten, the rest was given to the dogs and cats. How are these jackrabbits gotten? Since the prairie is full of them, a team and lumber wagon is driven over the prairie, and the hunter takes his position in the rear of the wagon, and pops one after another, in less than an hour he has sufficient rabbits to last for weeks. When the very first settlers came out to Dakota, they had no hogs, no cows, nothing to produce meat, the only meat they ate for the first year was jackrabbit meat. On Friday the blizzard had died down, so my visitor wanted to return. Allright, I got the ponies out and we started in my cutter for Mansfield, but we had not gone over a half mile and he said. "I cannot see anything anymore, let's turn back." We did, the tail end of the blizzard was not dead yet.

Blizzard, blizzard, snow and deeper snow, zero weather all winter of 1895, the windows were frozen up with thick ice for months without thawing out. Finally, Saturday I took the visitor to Aberdeen. The Chicago Northwestern R. R. running through Mansfield did not run a train for two weeks. The entire track was covered with two to four feet of snow. The

Chicago, Milwaukee and St. Paul had a dozen snowplows running constantly to keep the tracks clear. I drove to Aberdeen, left him off at the depot, turned around and drove home, 50 miles without a bit to eat, nor did the ponies get a dinner. Such is life and such was life in Dakota. Now the missionaries use ponies that eat gas and oil instead of hay and oats, they are much faster also. But the majority of ministers in Dakota, need only attend to one and two congregations. Those long and dangerous and unpleasant, and lonesome trips are a thing of the past. In bad weather, zero weather, deep snow, they can take it easy at home. But they must face hardships, trials, and tribulations all the same. It is not pleasant to be a minister anywhere, it is a hard life, and the minister's wife shares it in abundance. It takes courage and determination to reach the goal. If God would not be on their side and assist them, no one could accomplish anything. Especially the ministers in Dakota are in need of our prayer and aid. I had such a large field and so many people to take care of me that I needed no support from outside. We never were in need or want. Once a member came with his wagon loaded with grain. He said, "It is all I thrashed this year, 15 bushels, it is not enough for me by far, so I bring it for your ponies." What a spirit. Another went to the bank and borrowed enough money, at 12% to pay his share on my salary. Do you hear of anyone doing so now? Upon hearing this, I went to the bank and returned the money to save the interest. At a January yearly congregational meeting, the treasurer read the annual report of all that was taken from every member, and all was spent during the year. In reading the names of every member, and the amount he contributed, he came to the name of a certain member, who had lost his whole crop by hail and had excused himself, previously, for not being able to pay his share. His name was read and "paid in full." That member arose and said "It is a mistake, I did not pay anything, I could not." "Paid in full" repeated the treasurer. How was that to be explained? Some other member of the congregation, who had more luck with his crop, had paid that man's dues for him. Can you beat that? Is that not a fine, Christian act or deed? Did God bless him for that deed? He certainly did.

In teaching school, a boy and a girl from one and the same family came to school, but one week the boy came and missed the next week, in the week the boy missed the girl came and then she missed a week and the boy was present. I asked them why such a change about, they would not answer, but dropped their heads. I knew immediately something was wrong. So I drove to their home after school to find out. Here was the reason: The poor parents had but one pair of shoes for the boy and the girl, so they had to change about in wearing them. At home they had wooden shoes around the premises. I asked them when they would go to town, they said, "Saturday." I went there on Friday, gave some money to the storekeeper, who ran a general store, and told him when these people came into the store, to fit shoes on either the boy or the girl. The next Monday both the boy and the girl came to school. Fine children, I confirmed both, by now they are grown to man and woman. Is that mission work also? I must confess, God blessed my work greatly, done in the missionfield in Dakota. It is hard work, constant and no vacation either.

One of my friends from college and seminary life, whose wife was a chum of my wife in St. Louis, he being stationed at Chicago, wrote to me, upon hearing of my work, "I have a collection on hand from my congregation, is at my disposal, I thought of you people out there in the prairie,

and am sending it to you for your use." I wrote back to him, thanking him for his kindness, and advised him to send it to one who is in greater need than I. Is that mission work? Now, in 1932, I would hardly refuse such an offer. No danger it will come no more.

The First Mission Festival in South Dakota.

The first mission festival in South Dakota was celebrated in midsummer of the year 1895. It took place at the home congregation at Mansfield. On the north side of the church a framework was erected, scant-

LUTHERAN CHURCH AT LEBANON, SOUTH DAKOTA — 1932

ling 2 x 4, 12 and 15 feet were borrowed from a lumber yard, erected 24 x 60 feet. The roof or top of the scantling frame-building was covered with green limbs gotten from the banks of the James River, about 35 miles east of the church. All the congregations, the preaching places, and mission places were invited, and they came. Some came on Saturday before and were entertained by the members of the Mansfield congregation, never before had such a vast assembly of men and women and children come together in that locality. The services were conducted by a pioneer missionary of North Dakota and by one pioneer missionary of South Dakota. The first service was held in the forenoon, the second in the afternoon. Our reed organ was taken over and put on the platform and my wife accompanied the singing. For the first time, the people heard an organ accompanying their familiar songs since they left the old country. What a singing! What enthusiasm did it instill in their hearts! The collection was a surprise, although drought and hot winds had reduced their crops almost to a

minimum, the collection amounted to $283.50. This amount was turned in. Everybody enjoyed himself, and the crowd returned joyfully to their respective homes.

Going Home to Mother After Being Away so Far From Her for Three Years. Marks the Fifth Year.

With what pleasure did we go home, we could hardly wait the arrival of the day to start for home.

CHAPTER VI.

My Experiences in the Missionwork in South Dakota.

In the fore part of May, in the year, 1896, we went home, first to my home in Ft. Wayne, Indian, there to attend the delegate synod of Missouri, Ohio and other states. Our little Alma was now two and a half years old, very talkative, she jabbered all the time along. Her mama had gotten her a brand new dolly. After we had entered the train for Chicago, the train had merely started, bang! goes the doll its head broken to pieces. She received the name of "Schussel." Well we got to Chicago and thence to Ft. Wayne. Grandma was anxious to see her grandchild. The synodical sessions were conducted as usual. At one night session of the ministers, a prominent minister of one of the Ft. Wayne congregations, in whose beautiful church the sessions were held, dropped over and died shortly thereafter. The largest funeral procession I have ever seen was held for that faithful servant.

During that week of the Synod's sessions, the destructive cyclone struck the city of St. Louis, the home of my wife. Five days after the cyclone we arrived in St. Louis and saw the destruction by that terrible cyclone. I was telling the people concerning cyclones in Dakota. I could notice they did not believe my description of a cyclone in full, now they were eyewitnesses of one, it verified all I said. My wife and our little Alma remained several months with her mother and folks before she returned to the prairie.

South Dakota was a dry State, not only because of lack of rain but because prohibition had been in effect for some time. My experience turned me against that law. People in South Dakota could get all kinds of liquors at all times, but they had to order by large quanties. When a case, or keg or jug full arrived, there was no stopping until it was all gone. The result, where men could otherwise control themselves, at the sight of quantity, became drunk. I am sure, if these men could have had a glass of beer now and then, instead of a keg, they would not have become drunk. "We must not leave the balance in the keg or in the jug go to waste and spoil, drink it." There would have been more drinking done, but because of slim crops, they had no money. Again, the communion wine was prohibited, and it had to be shipped into the state under disguise, as merchadise, or books, or tea, or any other heavy goods. Now it happened that an order of communion wine had arrived at the depot at Mansfield, it was cold, zero weather, and the box was left outside on the platform. The box containing the wine was labeled, "books." Before I received notice of the arrival of the box, it had been taken inside the warm depot. The ticket agent was an elderly lady, a second Carrie Nation, to every one, friend, foe, stranger as well as acquaintance, she would preach her dry speech. When I arrived at the depot to get my box of communion wine, the frozen bottles thawed and the red fluid

ran out of the box staining the floor. The lady agent remarked, "Reverend, your books are leaking!" Oh, did I get mad, what I thought were no good thoughts to put into words, but I almost took the box and threw it at her head. That turned me against prohibition.

Pleasant Experiences and Unpleasant.

If the pleasant experiences which I had in my mission work in South Dakota were put to balance with the unpleasant, it would almost balance. A very unpleasant thing for any minister is produced by family quarrels or quarrels by neighbors. Generally, the congregation has to suffer and the

PARSONAGE OF LUTHERAN CONGREGATION IN LEBANON, S. DAKOTA — 1932

minister gets it "in the neck." Such a thing happens in every true minister's life of course. But if he is an inexperienced man and has to deal with a serious case for the first time, he is apt to make grave mistakes. He may get between two fires, to split the congregation and his service is no more a blessing to that congregation. Here is a case that caused me much trouble and worry and sleepless nights.

Two neighbors, members of my congregation had terrible quarrels. They told me that the two had already had something against each other in the old country before they came to the United States. The hatred was brought over. The one we will call "Fritz," the other "Henrik" of course these are not their real names. The wife of Fritz was Minna, and the wife of Henrik was Katarina. Fritz and Henrik were keeping up the war between each other and also between their two families. They had relatives in the congregation and the war between thoes fighting generals and their two families spread on to the relatives of both sides. An imminent split in the congregation threatened. They would all come to service, no one stepped back, which is generally the case in most congregations, whenever there is a quarrel between neighbors or members of the same congregation. Either they both will stay away from church and not pay their dues, they are done with church, religion, and God. Not so with Fritz and Henrik and their respective sides. But they would not greet each other when they met, in church they would turn their backs toward each other, and every time they were compelled to face each other, red, turkey red showed up in their countenances. The members and relatives of both sides got into severe arguments especially after services, outside the church. I heard words ex-

changed which did not sound biblical to me nor anywhere near a prayer. I saw fists made at each other. In spite of an old grayhaired father's warning not to take sides, let the men fight it out for themselves. I have often thought, if our country and nation and government would have heeded and followed such advice in 1917 1918, our nation would not be walking around with a black eye and will keep that black eye for some time to come. "Let them fight it out, don't take sides." Oh! if our country would have left them there fight it out, and would not have taken sides." What the result would have been? Figure it out for yourself. The old father's saying I practised. Now no member of the Lutheran church is permitted to take Holy Communion until they are reconciled. If the war would have continued much longer, the whole congregation could not have been permitted to take Holy Communion, because about half of the congregation was at war with the other half. It could not go on this way. My preaching seemed to be of no use, all in vain. Those were tough and trying days and weeks and months. I was on the verge of throwing up the whole business and quitting, packing up and leave them fighting it out.

Fritz came one day and told me his whole story. It took hours to tell the whole "geschmeer". "Nun Pastor, was denken sie yetzt davon, ist der Henrik nicht ein miserabler Kerl und Lump?" (Well, Pastor what do you think of it, isn't Henrik a miserable fellow and fool?) He expected me to side in with him and declare him innocent and Henrik guilty. I only said nothing more, nothing less, "According to your story, you are right." That pleased him wonderfully, he spread the news all over the congregation, "The pastor is on my side, we have won, he said I was right." Not long after that came Henrik. He was mad, ready to give me a fight with his fists and punishment. I kept cool, and invited him to tell his story. He did. It took him all afternoon to do so, and a greater part of the night. When he was exhausted, he held his fist under my nose and said at the pitch of his voice, "Now, you wolf in sheeps clothing, what have you to say now, decide before I leave, is Fritz right or am I right?" I am certain if I would have said, "Fritz is right," he would have knocked the stuffings out of me. I said to him, nothing more nothing less, "According to your story you are right." He cooled down, the red in his face disappeared, he held out his hand and said, "I knew you would be on my side after you heard me. Oh, that Fritz is a living devil and the others who stick to him will all go to hell. Good night!" Not long after this encounter with Henrik came the wife of Fritz, Minna. In the beginning she talked very pleasant about the weather and she even brought a basket of goodies. I suspected right away, to bribe me, she acted that way. She began her story, which corresponded in detail with her husband's. As she advanced in her narrative, she grew more and more excited and louder and louder and vehement, raging for madness. I thought she would go into hysterics. I told her now and then to be calm and cool and not excite herself so much, it may injure her health.

When men quarrel with each other it is terrible, but when women quarrel and fight, I hate to say it, out of respect to the gentler sex, but I must say no gentleness, no meekness any more, but they fight furiously to the finish. Minna did, and tried to corner me, "You said my husband Fritz was right, and when Henrik was here, you told Henrik he was right. You are no true minister at all. You lie to get out of it, and besides Henrik's wife Katarina makes nasty faces at me, and hollers, that everybody can and must hear it, "The Pastor is on our side." I said no more.

no less, "I did say to your husband Fritz, according to your story you are right and to Henrik I said also according to his story he is right." She answered, "That's it, you are no true minister, you try to carry water on both shoulders at the same time. "You had better leave." Good night, my wife who overheard every conversation between the fighting parties and myself, also thought the quarrel would never be settled that way.

Sometime thereafter I invited Fritz and his wife to come to my home. They were more than willing to do so. They came early after supper. I also invited Henrik and his wife for the same evening, not telling either who would be there. Fritz and his wife did not know that Henrik and his wife

NEGRO MISSION — 60 MILES SOUTHWEST OF LEBANON, S. DAKOTA — 1932

were to be at the parsonage that same evening also. If they had known about it, none would have come. I was talking with Fritz and his wife in a general but friendly tone, in comes Henrik and his wife, and as soon as they saw who was there, they immediately wanted to go out and go home, but I was still at the door to prevent it. Finally I had them seated, the one party in one corner, the other in another. They did not greet one another but the faces of all four turned fiery red. I sat down, then I arose and said, "Let us pray." And I did make prayer, imploring God to guide us and to unite the separated hearts together, make peace, etc. etc. After the prayer I sat down again and no one spoke. It was as silent as in a death chamber. I rose again and broke the silence. "If you two parties keep up this quarrel, you are splitting this congregation in two. If you split up this congregation I will be compelled to leave, and if I am gone, you will have to settle the quarrel and be reconciled to each other before another pastor will take charge of your congregation. If you should keep up your anger and hatred until your death, without repentance and reconciliation, you cannot keep quarreling on in heaven, God will show you the place where you may quarrel forever. It is hell to quarrel like you do, you are causing a hell on earth for the congregation, and do not believe for a monent that any minister can stand to remain in such hell as you prepare for him. God still loves you He loves you sinners, but he hates your actions. God wants you in His

heaven, but he cannot take you as you are in this sad condition. If you repent and are reconciled to each other, your life will be more pleasant for yourself, your children, your relatives, for the entire congregation, and lastly for me your humble pastor and his wife."

"I thus spoke to you my dear brother Fritz, according to your story you are right, and to you my dear Henrik, I said the same thing, according to your story you are right. I did not take, I could not take sides, because I love you both the same, and did not want to lose the one or the other, but save you both." By this time Minna and Katarina got their handkerchiefs and began to weep. Fritz got up and walked towards Henrik and said, "Henrik, keeg me mol in die Ogen! Kum gaive me die hand." (Henrik, look me in the eyes. Come give me your hand) Henrik did. There and then peace was restored by the enemies, the men and women were reconciled. They left that night happily, the red in their faces had disappeared with a "Thanks God, and good night." They departed.

The next Sunday I preached on reconciliation among striving men based on God's wonderful reconciliation unto the whole world for and through His only Son Jesus Christ, taking the text 2 Cor. 5, 19 "God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation." Was that mission, work?

In another congregation, two members got on the outs with each other over a very insignificant matter. Their hatred was not as deep rooted as yet. I got the two together and had them shake hands. One of them made the remark, "You see pastor, I cannot help it, God made me so, I fly up in the air too quick, because I have such a temperature" meaning temperament. I said, "You want to carry a thermometer with you to measure your temperature with, always when you feel like flying up."

How deep the root of self-righteousness is implanted in man's heart, how natural religion has taken hold of him, the religion, "Do good and be good is the way to heaven." Or, "I have done wrong, I must do something to make it right." I had preached and delivered a series of sermons on the central doctrine of Christianity, the doctrine with which the Christian church falls or stands, the doctrine of justification, that we are justified before God, not by our works, nor by the law, but by the Grace of God, by the faith in Jesus Christ. I pointed out every phase of the doctrine and was sure my hearers understood me "nothing in us, all by God." "Nothing in my hands I bring, simply to Thy cross I cling; not the labours of my hands, can fulfill Thy laws demands, could my zeal no respite know, could my tears forever flow; all for sin could not atone: Thou must save and Thou alone."

After I had finished the series on the doctrine of justification, an old mother came to me after service and said—now what would you expect her to say? Would it not be this, "Pastor I thank you for those sermons, they are for us poor, repentant sinners." No, listen what she said, "Pastor if all people were as good and pious as you and I are, you need not preach such sermons." In spite of what she had heard, she believed the opposite, that is Satan's work. I had private talk with her based on Dr. Luther's small Catechism. She got other thoughts. Is that mission work?

I learned of a few families living quite a distance from Mansfield, my home, in the northwest section. I drove out to look them up. When I came to the place, I met the main man, a former member of a large congregation

in the east. I introduced myself to him, told him I was a traveling missionary, a Lutheran pastor of the Missouri Synod. He looked at me suspiciously and said, "Can you prove it, that you are a minister and a Lutheran, and of the Missouri Synod?" I was stunned at that question, never had anything like that occurred in my life, that I should identify myself. I told him, that I had my diploma of graduation from college and from the seminary in St. Louis. He replied, "That's exactly what a humbug of a minister did not very long ago, he said the same thing about himself as you just now did. That he was a missionary, a Lutheran, and of the Missouri Synod. We believed him, but after he cheated us out of our hard earned money by

LUTHERAN CHURCH — 13 MILES SOUTHWEST OF ABERDEEN — 1932

selling claims unto us for a high price per acre, which he never owned, and skipped with it, we can trust no one, just claiming to be a missionary." Now what would you have done in my place? Would you have turned around and said "goodbye?" Here is what I did. I challenged him to examine me and convince himself that I told the truth by claiming to be a true missionary. He did. He got Luther's small Catechism. "Say the Ten Commandments," I recited them without stumbling. "Say the Three Articles," I did without a mistake. "Say the Lord's Prayer with Luther's explanation." but in so doing I got mixed up in some petitions and made a few mistakes. Then I had to recite the Sacraments of the Altar. That was easy. He questioned me thus, "What does the Bible teach concerning the bread and wine in the Sarament?" I said, "In, with and under the bread and wine we receive Christ's true body and blood with one's lips." he was pleased. "What does the Bible teach on the doctrine of justification?" That was an easy question for me to answer. We live that doctrine practically. But now came a tough question which surprised me, he to ask that question, it is, "What does the Bible teach on the doctrine of election or predestination? My answer, "God saved them all, but made a selection before the creation of the world, those whom He selected He will have to hear the Gospel and be baptized. God did not preordain some to everlasting damnation. If man, any man is lost it is all his fault. If man is saved, it is all God's grace. We cannot solve the mystery in the doctrine of election. We cannot

answer the question why God elected or selected the one before another." Well, the examiner was well pleased with my examination—I passed, and was premitted to preach for once again, and I held my first service then and every two weeks thereafter. I did not cheat those people out of a penny. A congregation was started there. They soon built a church but I had left South Dakota before it was finished. One member came to me to Mansfield and asked me to let him have $50.00 to buy a gangplow which was for sale at an auction. I handed him the $50.00. Upon learning that I was to leave soon, he came again and wanted me to take a note on the $50.00. I refused and said "If your face is not security enough, the paper will do me no good. You pay whenever the Good Lord has prospered you." Years rolled by, the $50.00 were forgotten. One day the mailman brought a letter from South Dakota, containing a draft for $75.00 for which my wife bought her sewing machine which she still has today. Was that mission work?

A Majestic Winter.

The winter of 1896 - 1897 was the severest winter I ever lived through, the coldest, the snowiest, the winter of blizzards upon blizzards. The average snow across the prairie was three or four feet. The snowdrifts like young mountains, a snowdrift between the parsonage and the church at Mansfiield was so high you could hardly see the church from the parsonage. I shoveled more snow that winter than in all the balance of my life. Every time I wanted to get my ponies out of the stable meant a half day of shoveling to get them. Steps were made of snow for the ponies to climb upon the top of the snow after they left the stable, Once I forgot to close every possible crack of the stable. So one day when I got in the stable the ponies were all covered with snow, only their heads and neck were bare. Well, they were warm at least. But I worked all day carrying the snow out of the stable. The sleighing was fine—a solid one way track was soon made, but "Oh boy!" when you meet a team coming in the opposite direction, one had to turn out and the unlucky one would bury his team in the deep snow which was so soft it would not hold the ponies. The ponies acted like helpless sheep whenever they would sink down into the snow, there they lay. Now what? No man would travel in that winter without taking a shovel along. Nothing was left but to go shoveling snow and dig the ponies out. If you would meet a sled with a load on, you were always supposed to have it remain on the track and you turn out. The snowdrifts would bear the heaviest load, but where the snow was only from three to four feet deep, it would not bear even a man.

In my memorandum, I read quite frequently "Could not get through to the west, could not reach Aberdeen, got to Mansfield and Warner, only track leading there.. Had to miss Rudolph, no track." The railroads were tied up by snow for weeks. The snowplows were stuck somewhere. Just think, in four weeks we received no mail, no paper, the mail could not get through, the old papers in the house were read and reread and even advertisements were interesting news. Such a winter! My only prayer was that God would keep every member alive and cause no funeral. He did. No funeral through that whole winter. I cannot see how it would have been possible to bury a man. I took our little Alma in her sled and took her on top of a high snowdrift, gave the sled a push and away she went, at the bottom the sled would tumble into the snow. That was fun. She remembers this to this day. When members came to church in their sleds, they would

drive on top of a drift, unhitch and tie their teams to the sleds, On Re formation Day they came in sleds already, from that time on until April continuous snow. I did not see my buggy from November until March, it was covered with snow. Snow, snow, everywhere snow. People had to keep a shovel in the house to clear the snow away from the door before they could get out. The pictures taken of this winter's snow show better than words can tell of the majestic winter.

Snow Melts, Water, Floods, Everywhere Water, Creeks Overflowing, Prairie Covered With Water.

The little congregation in Aberdeen, South Dakota had rented for a nominal amount, an abandoned Methodist Church. We conducted services in that church, when I left South Dakota. Driving through water almost all

LUTHERAN PARSONAGE — 13 MILES SOUTHWEST OF ABERDEEN — 1932

the way from my Mansfield home church to Aberdeen, no services could be held, the floor of the church was covered with four inches of water, and no one could enter the church unless on a float and with rubber boots. Arriving at home from that watery trip, sad news awaited me. **Our little Alma had broken her leg.**

It happened Sunday. My wife and our little girl were alone at home. Little Alma followed her mama up the stairway and fell down, fracturing her limb. Her mother picked her up and carried her to neighbors, a distance of a half mile and back. The neighbor hitched up his team to a farmwagon and chained the wagonbox to the wagon, in case he had to drive through deep water. This was a wise thing for him to do, his box would have been lifted off the wagon several times on his way to Northville to get the only doctor in the entire community, a distance of 14 miles from the parsonage. But his dangerous trip to Northville and return was in vain. The only doctor had a confinement case and would not risk his life coming through the deep water to our home. Monday when I arrived at home there was no doctor in sight yet. The poor thing suffered pain but her mother did a wise deed—she kept vinegar bandages on the broken limb constantly, that prevented swelling, and eased the pain to some extent. As soon as I saw the situation, I asked the neighbor once more to drive that dangerous water-way to Northville and send a dispatch to Aberdeen for a doctor. He did, wonderful neighbor! On Tuesday afternoon, the doctor arrived from Aberdeen. He hired two section hands to drive him on a handcar from

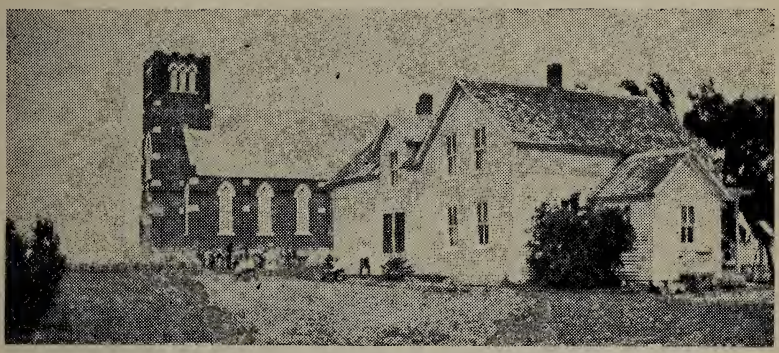
Aberdeen to Mansfield. No train for several weeks, all bridges out and tracks under water at many places. My good neighbor met him with his farmwagon at Mansfield. As soon as the doctor arrived and had the limb examined, he said, "You did the only thing that could be done, kept the swelling down by applying vinegar." Immediately he went to work. I gave the ether, her mother went out into the prairie. The bone was set and put in a cast of plaster paris. All went fine and well. We struck a good doctor, a young doctor, he certainly was splendid. "What are the charges?" I expected him to say $100.00. I would have gladly given it to him without hesitation. He said $30.00 I got $30.00 and he handed back $5.00. He had to give the section hands to bring him out about 20 miles from Aberdeen to Mansfield and return $5.00 a piece, leaving him $15.00 for his wonderful work. I surely appreciated his service. If we ever should have a son, we would try to make a doctor out of him. So it did materialize and turn out. Our little boy following his sister Alma was made a doctor. The pain was gone and little Alma smiled and laughed again. I built a playhouse for her outside on the southeast corner of the parsonage—carried her out and in every day until the doctor said "take off the cast now." He gave me a special shears to cut it off, the bones were healed fine and good.

Before I shall enter upon my trips through the water of that flood, I shall sidetrack a little and relate how the devil came to baptize an infant. Upon my arrival at a missionplace, I was informed that a child was to be baptized. Good and well, the more infants baptized, the more "Lord's prayer." I took down the name of the child, its birth and the names of the parents, perfect strangers to me and the names of the sponsors, members of the missionplace. One had told me before the service the parents were Catholic. So much the better I said. I baptized the little one and after the close of the service went up to the young couple to get acquainted whose firstborn I had now baptized. Asking them why they came to me to baptize their child, the young parents told me they were both reared in the Catholic faith and married by the priest. The young father was a railroader, working for the Chicago, Milwaukee, St. Paul Railroad. Now when their little one was born he went to the priest and wanted his baby baptized by the priest. The priest called him down and got angry and used harsh words. "You have not made your yearly confession and your wife did not either." The young man tried to excuse himself, a railroader must work every time the company calls him, Sundays as well as week days and concerning his young wife, how could she during her time with child? "One word followed the other, pastor, you see," He continued, " The priest got mad and it made me mad. Finally the priest got up from his chair and hollered at me 'Go to the devil and have your child baptized', so we came to you." Then a good devil baptized a child.

Trips Made In Winter and Through Deep Water.

The Dakota prairie is not level land all over, at some sections it is as level as a table or floor, in other sections it is rolling, but no hills only high lands and low lands. In the low lands was the danger of driving though. You must bear in mind, Dakota is filled with slues, these slues are filled with water after the snow melts. Rain in summer does not affect the slues very much, in fact they dry out and produce long grass, which is mowed into hay. The slues are different sizes, large and small, some are

deep, some shallow, but when they are overflowing connecting one slue with another, it is very difficult to find a way between the two. I was compelled to drive through such treacherous slues. I nearly drowned once. The ponies walked on slowly in the water for sometime, they gradually got in deeper and deeper. I noticed they were trying to swim. I was in a deep slue. Quickly I turned around, too quick, for I nearly upset my buggy and had forgotten to weigh it down with stones. I finally got out of the water, but where to try it again, to cross the slue? I tried to do so at another place believing it to be the high spot between the two slues, the same thing again, deep water. I tried at several places, finally I found the spot to cross,



LUTHERAN CHURCH AND PARSONAGE — MANSFIELD, SOUTH DAKOTA — 1932
OLD HOME PLACE OF REV. AND MRS. F. A. KIESS

but the water was still so deep that it came into the buggy and I was compelled to put my feet on top of the dashboard to prevent wet feet. Now being across the most dangerous slue I knew I had to cross a creek. That creek was dry in the summer and very little water in it all the year around, but now its banks overflowed with water, it had the resemblance of a young river. I took all precautions before I crossed. Bear in mind, there were no improved roads then in fact no roads after you were away a distance from city or town or settlement. No roads and no bridges of course. The first thing I did before crossing that treacherous creek was that I piled my buggy full of stones to prevent it from floating in case my ponies were compelled to swim and topple over and throw me into the current. I put my top down of the buggy. I had heard of a missionary who had his buggy weighted down by stones, left his top up, sat on the seat and drove into the swollen creek. He got in deeper and deeper. The water came into his buggy, his ponies began to swim, the water came into his boots, he held them up, but finally the water rose to his seat, he got on his feet and stood upright. A man on the other side witnessing all this called to him to put his top down, but the poor pastor could not do so, no time and no way to do it. He could not get his head out of the top far enough. The water went over his head, he drowned, Remembering this, I put the top of my buggy down, got on my feet and stood on top of the seat, held in my right hand the lines tight and holding in my left hand my traveling bag containing my books and gown, and communion set, wafers and wine, and now in God's name, through. Well, I got through alive, but soaked up to the chest, two feet deeper and I probably would not be here to write this. God saved me, thanks be to him! But I did make up my mind then and

there, never to drive through deep water again and thus put my life in danger. Was that missionary zeal?

A Few Short Remarks According To My Memorandum, 1896-1897.

Oct. 31. Reformation fest. The members came to service in sleds..
Nov. 8. Heavy snow, could not get through on the entire trip.
Nov. 22. Blizzard.
Nov. 26. Thanksgiving Day, blizzard.
Nov. 29. First Advent Sunday, terrible deep snow, no train.
Dec. 9. The deepest snow, still, made a sick call.
Jan. 1. 1897, New Years, No service possible, blizzard.
Jan. 3. No services, blizzard still raging.
Jan. 17. No services, blizzard.
Jan. 21. The storm so fierce, afraid would blow home away.
Jan. 23. Heavy snowfall, averaging 3 to 4 ft. of snow on the level.
Jan. 24. No services anywhere, blizzard.
Feb. 6. The track for sleighing in bad condition, covered with snow.
Feb. 7. A very difficult trip, life in danger, ponies exhausted.
Feb. 14. Arrived in Aberdeen, too late.
Feb. 28. Because of severe cold, stove red hot, kept furcoat on, preached to a few men who had come to church. Too cold to make Aberdeen.
March 3. Visitor arrived, only Mansfield visited, could not go anywhere, blizzard.
March 7. Took visitor to Aberdeen, nobody in service, could not get through.
March 10. Made a mission trip.
March. 14 The very best of sleighing, good bed.
March 15. On a Monday preached in the town of Warner, South Dakota.
March 28. Could not get to Aberdeen, soft snow, ponies buried in snow. Harness all broken, got home after dark.
March 29. Could not get to Wesley, to preach.
April 1. High water begins.
April 4. Could not cross the creek—too high water.
April 11. Palm Sunday, got to Rudolph, preached. Got to Aberdeen in spite of high water, no services in Aberdeen, water standing in church. Alma broke her limb.
April 30 On our wedding anniversary received a call to the east.
May 26. Started packing.
May 30. Left South Dakota, to serve a congregation in the east.

When I left South Dakota, there were about one thousand souls to be taken care of in my mission field or territory. Now, in 1930, there are about two thousand souls more. Here are their numbers, location and the name of the present pastor.

1. Rev. F. J. Graeber, Aberdeen, 300 souls.
2. Rev. F. T. Eggert, Aberden, 13 miles Southwest, 236 souls.
3. Rev. C. F. Kellerman, Mansfield, 215 souls.
4. Rev. C. F. Kellerman, Chelsea, 62 souls.
5. Rev. A. Szedekin, Wecota, 138 souls.
6. Rev. T. H. Buehner, Sisseton, 164 souls.
7. Rev. T. Schroeder, Lebanon, 100 souls.
8. Rev. A. C. Scholtz, Hot Springs, 70 souls.

Falkton, Ipswich, Roscoe, Eureka, and Bowdel, are now served by pastors of the Wisconsin Synod. In North Dakota I only explored Mandan and

Bismarck, found a few German Lutheran people and made a report of my finding. I never preached at these places.

9. Rev. J. V. Richert, Bismarck, 160 souls.
10. Rev. I. T. Wholfeil is pastor in Hanover and serves a large congregation of 330 souls.

A sad thing happened to the minister in Bowdel in 1894. His dear wife died, he called me, being the nearest pastor to preach the funeral sermon and to bury her, but I was sick in bed, could not speak a word, quinsy, and too weak to stand up. The poor brother had to bury his wife without a minister to officiate. My health—and I was always strong and healthy—began to fail, I was compelled to make my trips kneeling down in my buggy, and could hardly conduct services because of severe pains, but made no complaints to anyone.

It was hard and strenuous work, but the Lord was with me, and blessed my work, saved my life many times. His be all the Glory!

Before I conclude my story of experiences in the mission field of South Dakota, I must say a few words of real heroes, or rather heroines—the wives of the missionaries. Taking them far away from their home, their dear ones, out into the lonesome prairie, there to be all alone, for days, requires not only courage but more—a sacrifice of comfort and ease, of society and pleasant company, to share the trials and tribulations, hardships and sorrow of her missionary husband. The success of missionaries depends a great deal upon his wife. She must share with him not only the days of prosperity and joy, but also the days of adversity and trials. The President of the Minnesota and Dakota District, now president of the Missouri Synod, the venerable Dr. Pfotenhauer, paid us missionaries a pleasant visit quite frequently, and his encouraging words reached the spot of our hearts, he called the wives of the missionaries true servants of the Lord Jesus Christ and serving Him at the side of her husband the missionaries. Such a good wife, a faithful wife, God gave me.

THE END

Distances Traveled by Ponies and Railroads.

From Aberdeen, South Dakota, to Rudolph, 13 miles.
From Aberdeen, South Dakota, to Mansfield, 22 miles
From Aberdeen, South Dakota, to Lebanon, 107 miles.
From Aberdeen, South Dakota, to Redfield, 42 miles.
From Aberdeen, South Dakota, to Faulkton, 74 miles.
From Aberdeen, South Dakota, to Ashton, 30 miles.
From Aberdeen, South Dakota, to Ipswich, 28 miles.
From Aberdeen, South Dakota, to Roscoe, 42 miles.
From Aberdeen, South Dakota, to Eureka, 67 miles.
(This trip was made once by ponies.)

From Mansfield, South Dakota to Mandon, Bismarck, Salem, and Hanover about 190 miles. This trip was made by train twice.

From Mansfield, South Dakota, to Sisseton, about 110 miles by ponies and buggy.

The ponies and buggy could take a short cut across the prairie, no matter what road, there were no particular roads. This shortened mileage.

Now with automobile, it must be a pleasure trip to cover that vast territory.